Preparing and Teaching the Lesson

PRIZE CONTEST ARTICLES FROM
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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The Sunday School Times Prize Contest Articles

Preparing and Teaching the Lesson

THE TWO PRIZE WINNERS:

"How I Prepare My Lesson for Teaching"
By MRS. G. A. STEAD

"How I Teach the Lesson in Class"
By MISS N. GRACE COOLEDGE

TOGETHER WITH SELECTIONS FROM TWENTY-ONE OTHER ARTICLES OFFERED IN THE COMPETITION

T C
R E
S S. Teachers

PHILADELPHIA
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES COMPANY
1922

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FOREWORD

Many a prize is a surprise to the winner! Many a really expert Sunday-school worker doesn't know he is an expert, and has no idea how useful his methods would be to others until the story of that work is somehow brought to light.

When The Sunday School Times offered a prize of $25.00 for the best article on "How I Prepare My Lesson for Teaching," and another for the best article on "How I Teach the Lesson in Class," the offer evidently set folks thinking. One hundred and twenty-six manuscripts from thirty-two states and four Canadian provinces were submitted on the first theme, and sixty-five from twenty-four states and four provinces on the second.

In this little volume—but big in suggestive, usable plans—are the two prize-winning articles, and choice selections from twenty-one others among the competing articles.

Everything here is the outcome of actual experience in teaching the various ages in the Sunday-school, and represents the best work now to be found in the field of lesson-preparation and lesson-teaching. The writers of the articles include four pastors, eight housewives, a bookkeeper, a salesman, a real estate dealer, an evan-

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gelist, two Y. W. and Y. M. C. A. workers, several school teachers, a school principal, a house servant, and a secretary—living in rural communities, villages, and cities large and small. The shortest term of Sunday-school work among them is seven years, the longest fifty years. Fifteen of the twenty-three have seen twenty or more years of Sunday-school service.

If these twenty-three workers have averaged forty-five Sundays a year, spending three hours a week on the lesson in school and out, *each* would have given *each* year an amount of time equal to seventeen business days of eight hours; and the twenty-three represent a total of no less than five hundred and eighty-five years of Sunday-school service; that is, they have devoted almost ten thousand full business days to the work! An experienced group, indeed!

Their experience is yours for prayerful study and application, as here set forth.

Other books or booklets in the Prize Series are:

"How We Won and Held a Large Attendance" (25 cents).

"Conventions—And What Our School Gained from Them" (25 cents).

The choicest selections from two hundred and forty competing manuscripts make up this invaluable series.

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NOTE: This table of contents indicates the many aspects of preparation and teaching that are here taken up, and *each* article should be suggestive and helpful to *every* teacher. But it will also be noted that the material is arranged in a logical, graded order, and teachers of each age group will find special articles taking up the problems of that group. After the prize winners, the articles follow in order according to age of pupils taught, beginning with the youngest. In Part I, Article 2 is by a teacher of small boys; Articles 3 to 5 by teachers of boys and girls below or just entering the 'teen age; then follow teachers of classes in high school and college, and young people and adults. The same order is followed in Part II.

PART I

I

HOW I PREPARE MY LESSON FOR TEACHING

By Mrs. G. A. Stead

This article won The Sunday School Times prize of $25 in gold

My experience has been: for three years teacher of about a dozen boys in the "teen" age, and for three years teacher of a "mixed" Bible class of adults.

On *Monday* no work in the advance lesson is done. The day is used as a day of rest as far as Bible study is concerned. A day of rest and meditation upon the lesson taught the day before. I think the lesson over as a whole, noting the points actually covered and their apparent effect upon the class—by the interest shown and the thoughts advanced by the members of the class. I seek to see wherein the presentation of the lesson was weak, and ask forgiveness for whatever mistakes I made as teacher and for guidance in the preparation of the next lesson.

Tuesday I begin the study of the Scripture of the next lesson, reading the text and relative Scriptures and references carefully; and pick up the threads of connection between it and the preceding lesson.

By *Wednesday* I begin a general study as time permits me. First I get the geographical and historical settings. For this, in addition to the Scripture itself, I use Bible dictionaries and histories that I have confidence in as written by men who accept the Bible as God's inerrant word. I also find the Rand-McNally Bible Atlas almost indispensable.

As I study the historical setting and the incidents related in the text, I try to visualize the scenes. This prepares me to make a vivid picture at the lesson period. Older people as well as young like the mental lesson picture.

I find my class interested in localities, especially in comparing the ancient Bible names and places with those of other times or the present; for example: that the Shinar of the Bible is the same as Chaldea or Babylonia; that the Paphos of Acts was the capital city of Cyprus and was the home of the Roman proconsul, that it contained a famous shrine of the goddess Venus, that the town is still in existence, and how naturally by substituting "B" for "P," "f" for "ph" and dropping the silent "s," the name became the

"Baffa" of today; that the "Puteoli" where Paul landed on his way to Rome is the "Pozzuoli" of today near the city of Naples, and the Appii forum, or the market of Appius, was on the world renowned Appian Way—the Queen of Roads leading into Rome, built over 300 years B. C., and still in a good state of preservation, and that doubtless by this road Paul entered into the city. Scholars and travelers are acquainted with such facts, but the rank and file are not, and I know of nothing that makes the Bible more real.

We have a map—not a complete spick-and-span bought map, but one made on plain white muslin with colored crayon by one of our own members. It contains only the most important places mentioned—at least that was what it contained to begin with. We put in more places as we studied, but only a few of them. Other places we located relatively with the pointer so that the map does not become confusing by the multiplicity of places. I keep in mind this map as I prepare the lesson and plan just what shall be done with it the next Sunday, if the lesson calls for it.

When the lesson requires it I prepare a brief historical outline on a large sheet of white paper the size of our map, which is about two and one-half by three feet, and pin it to the map. I print in large letters with colored crayon so that the whole class, about twenty, may read it. For the

lessons on the kings of the divided kingdom of Israel I made the following outline. At the center, near the top, I placed in a column the names of the three kings before the division. At the left in a column the names of the principal kings of the northern kingdom as we studied them; at the right the names of the principal kings of Judah, or the southern kingdom.

When we had a lesson about or from a prophet I placed his name near the column of kings of the kingdom to which he belonged. After the captivity of Judah I placed the names of the prophets of the captivity in the center near the bottom of the chart.

As most people learn more readily through the eye than the ear, I find that these brief outlines plainly printed aid greatly in enabling the class to retain the history of the lessons.

I take five different papers or magazines which have write-ups on the lessons. They include The Sunday School Times and William Jennings Bryan's newspaper column. Four of them are sound; the fifth has at least a very strong leaning to modernism—the bringing in of the Kingdom by religious education and our own energetic and continual good works. I find this one useful by way of comparison and by showing me just when to sound a note of warning. I note the point on which it puts special and deceptive emphasis, and

by reading sound commentators and looking up Bible references I am ready to hold the class to the Word on that point.

Some time during the remainder of the week I find time to read all these different presentations of the lesson, jotting down what seem to be the highlights as I read. With each set of comments I reread the Scripture text. I think over both the Scripture and the lesson comments as I am about my work that does not require close mental attention. By Saturday I usually have the outline of the points I wish to make pretty well in mind, and *Saturday* or *early Sunday morning* I make out the briefest outline possible of the manner in which I wish to present that particular lesson.

The last thing before going to service, I go to prayer and ask that the Holy Spirit may speak to the class through the lesson. We begin by the use in concert of the Psalm prayer: "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

My manner of presentation varies. I believe this is a strong point in keeping up interest. While there is a general line of sameness, yet variety is spice to a Sunday-school lesson as well as to "life," and the teacher must prepare for it or he will soon be in a rut.

Sometimes the whole thought of the lesson may

be brought out by a series of references. I like such a lesson; for example, on the surety and indestructibility of God's Word, by the use of Nave's Topical Bible (which, by the way, I find most helpful) and Cruden's Concordance, I soon made out a list of references that occupied the entire time of the class after the reading of the lesson text and touching briefly upon the setting of the incident. The Word itself speaks with more power than any commentator.

In thinking over the points during the week I often see one which I feel may be helpful to some particular member of the class and pray that it may be, but I never make a personal reference in class.

One can not come in contact Sunday after Sunday with his class, hearing them express themselves, becoming acquainted with them, and learning something of their individual lives without coming to care a great deal for them and desiring that they may truly "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour"; and so, in preparing the lesson, the love for the class and the needs of the class are before the teacher.

As for illustrations, the lesson helps are usually quite abundant in them, but often a local incident with which the class are all familiar carries the truth home in a more forceful way than any outside illustration will do.

In the matter of "preparing discussions," I rather prepare to avoid them. My experience as a member of classes which indulged a great deal in discussions has been that those taking part in them usually have very little Bible authority to back them and very little knowledge of the Word. Many a lesson-period have I sat through listening to lively discussions of social, business and political questions which were dragged in and which amounted merely to the exchange of personal viewpoints, while the Word was neglected, the class dispersing with no more knowledge of it than when they came. I believe the text: "The entrance of *thy words* giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." The Word giveth light and understanding not only in regard to eternal things but to temporal things as well. Social and political subjects are read aright only as they are read through the light of the Word. How shall we read unless we know the Word, and when and where shall we learn the Word? I consider the greatest compliment I have received as a teacher is, "We get the Bible in our class."

As for "driving home the application," and to me there is a difference between illustrating the truth and driving home the application, I prepare almost nothing on that, yet I feel sure it is driven home. About my only effort is in the form of a general question which I leave each member to

answer for himself. I believe Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." I believe the Holy Spirit is faithful, and through the Word *he* drives home the application far beyond my power to do so. I believe if like Ezekiel we "eat the roll"—feast on his Word—we too shall find it sweeter than honey, and be set upon our feet ready to do his bidding.

To summarize, I find that a teacher's successful preparation of the lesson includes, in addition to a careful study of text and use of methods, earnest prayer, a conviction of the absolute truth and authority of the Word, and Christian love and solicitude for those who sit under his instruction.

II

GETTING ACTION INTO THE LESSON PERIOD

By Mary E. Bemis

"What gets me is, how did Jesus get up into the sky again?"

"Who made God?"

Just how would you have answered these questions of two small boys? To be ready for anything, however startling, is part of a teacher's privilege and to answer questions wisely to the satisfaction of the small boy or girl is no mean accomplishment.

I begin my study of a lesson about a week before it is to be used. In other words, as soon as one lesson has been taught, I begin work on the next. First I read over the designated passages of Scripture and any other portions necessary to give the setting. Then I study the notes in the lesson quarterly used by the class, looking up Bible references as they occur. With these I read The Sunday School Times, which gives a broad outlook upon the lesson, from the deeper back-

ground material found in the special articles and Dr. Smellie's column to the very practical suggestions of the regular departments. I look in a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia for anything that is not clearly understood.

As I study the Bible and various articles I keep my mind ready to seize upon the special teaching points that I can use to the best advantage with my class of boys. I usually select two points, one which will lead toward a greater knowledge of the Bible, and the other some practical point which will help the boys in their everyday Christian life. Having chosen the main points, I gather around each one material that will emphasize the thought.

The point selected to increase the pupil's knowledge of the Bible varies with the lessons. If the verses used for the lesson cover some Bible story that should be thoroughly learned, then every effort is made to teach the story so that it will not be forgotten. If the lesson is found in the Books of Chronicles, the parallel passage in Samuel or Kings may be read and the relation of the books to each other, the time at which they were written, and other facts may be explained. Or from a lesson in the Gospels which refers to some Old Testament prophecy, the connection between the Old and New Testaments may be shown by finding the prophecy and comparing the

passages. Again, if the lesson is one that is difficult for children to understand I take it as an opportunity for teaching something about the book itself, or I select a suitable verse and with the aid of Bible references and a concordance find other Bible verses which express the same or similar thoughts. These verses are used as a Bible drill which helps familiarize the children with the Bible—a reference is read and the one who finds it first reads it aloud.

For the practical point of the lesson, illustrations from life and stories that will interest and hold the attention of the class are selected. If too many stories are used the tendency is to scatter the thought, but one or two stories well told will help to strengthen the desired idea in the mind. Frequently an effective story is found in some book or magazine, or some topic of current events may be fittingly applied to the lesson. At intervals I plan to use a missionary story when it will serve the double purpose of illustrating the lesson and keeping up an interest in missionary work. I read the magazine "Missions" with this thought in mind.

Every Sunday I plan to have some feature that will put some action into the lesson period or at least help to hold the attention. It may be a Scripture drill as before mentioned, or some written work or a blackboard exercise. The latter

may consist in a simple cartoon, a catchy motto, a list of words or phrases describing some person or problem, or an example in arithmetic which may be drawn from the lesson. Map work has also proved helpful. Our class made its own large maps last year, one for Paul's missionary journeys and another to show the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The class met on a week-night and enlarged the map from a small copy to one about three feet by four feet on heavy brown paper. At first we drew simply the outlines with mountains, rivers; then, as the lessons progressed, we added the towns in colored crayon as we came to them.

Object lessons are very good if suitable ones can be found or worked out. I like to surprise my class with one occasionally. For instance, once I used a tall candle and a short piece of one. After they were lighted I asked, "Which one would you rather have?" and "Why?" Then I brought out the point that a boy who gives his heart to Christ when he is young can give his Master longer and more worth-while service than a man who has lived out half his life. Another time I took some different dishes in a basket, and, taking each one out separately, asked the boys if they could tell what the maker of the dish intended it to be used for. Then I pictured the confusion that would result if sugar were put in

the milk pitcher, salt in the sugar bowl, and so on. From that I led up to the thought that God has a definite purpose in life for each one of us, and appealed to the boys to do their best to find out and to do the very thing that God intended for them. (This object lesson is found in a pamphlet, "Object Lessons of Scripture, No. 1," Charles Eickenberg, 4029 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 20 cents.) I find that object lessons are best conducted by means of questions, getting the pupils to think "why" rather than telling the whole story.

As far as possible I have the boys carry out the different exercises—writing on the blackboard, doing map work and object lessons, *etc.* If this work is to be of value each step must be carefully planned. Sometimes I give the boys a share in this preparation by asking them to be ready to do some definite part or to provide materials.

Having studied the lesson material and after selecting the teaching points and planning the illustrations to be used, I come to the arrangement of my program for the class hour. I try to vary the manner of attack in order to gain the first attention of the class. Sometimes I begin with a story, sometimes with a Scripture drill, or a quick review on the map. Occasionally I have them learn a Bible verse and lead the thought on from that. A question about some-

thing in which they are vitally interested is a good leader, since it may be varied in many ways. For instance, "Did you ever look through a microscope? What did it do to the object? Now, find Galatians 6:7. We're going to look at that verse through a microscope." After deciding on the best way to begin I usually proceed through the Scripture lesson to the practical application of it, planning in a general way the important questions to be used. For a last impression I like to leave a thought of inspiration, challenge or appeal to better Christian living and so work up to that as a sort of climax. A Sunday-school worker once said in my hearing that the work of a teacher is something like that of a blacksmith. He must heat up the old material, lay on the new, and *pound*. It is pounding that brings the results. I try to keep this thought in mind and plan the lesson so that my blows of emphasis will fall to advantage and a definite impression be made.

With the program in order I glance through the next lesson to see what, if any, assignments should be given out for the following week. It may be parts of the Bible story to be read at home and told in class to save time, or towns to locate on the map, some subject to read up in an encyclopedia or a chapter from a book such as "Boy Talks," by Philip E. Howard, to be read and reported in class. I have sometimes used the

telephone or the mails in making assignments.

In order to crystallize my thoughts and to aid my memory, I nearly always write an outline for the program on a slip of paper. At the top the date and notes to remind me of any matters of business that should come before the class. Then the assignments for the next lesson and a note of special memory work, if there is any at the time. The program for the lesson is then set down briefly with Scripture references, important questions, and other notes in proper order. Of course, interruptions frequently occur and I cannot follow my program exactly as I planned, but in any case I pray that the Lord will deliver his message in some way to each member of the class.

Being as busy as the average person, I make my preparation for the lesson in odd moments during the week and usually the last thing every night. By keeping always on the lookout for suitable material I frequently find a lesson almost planning itself with very little conscious effort on my part, as sometimes when I begin studying a lesson there comes immediately to my mind an illustration that I had been keeping in the back of my head for weeks or months, and I build my lesson around that. At other times I have to dig a lesson out by main strength. Whatever the method of securing the lesson plans, I always find it worth all I put into it.

III

MAKING YOUR OWN BIBLE COMMENTARY

By H. Ellis Lininger

The best illustrations for most effective use are found in the Scriptures themselves. It is well to be on the lookout in your reading of the Bible for these. If you are reading the Bible in course, and have begun the study of your lesson in advance, you will find these with little effort. It is well to note them and place your notes where they can be looked over during the preparation of each lesson. I have found that a large envelope will receive such notations and illustrations clipped from time to time as we are reading the magazines, books, and papers. From this store many good illustrations may be found. To start out on a search for illustrations while you are preparing the lesson is a hard task if you have no stock on hand that has been gathered before. Such continual preparation makes teaching a business rather than a one-day affair.

I have my "crow quill" pen and "india ink" at hand and use it freely in marking my Bible

with such marginal references as I may want to use in the future in teaching or otherwise, for making notes that will help me in teaching the lesson, for writing in meanings of words or phrases, for outlining the passage, or for any other notes that occur to me to be of permanent value in Bible study. A Bible put through a course like this is worth all the helps on the lesson for future use. To me this is the most helpful step in lesson preparation. I then have my Bible ready for use in the class or future study. This takes time, but is a time-saver in the long run. It is the most helpful discovery I have made in Bible study or lesson planning.

IV

DAY-BY-DAY PREPARATION

By Leslie E. Dunkin

The class or classes of junior boys, boys of ages from nine to thirteen years inclusive, are generally considered as "the thorn in the flesh" for the average Sunday-school and the teacher. I must confess that at times they are a "thorn in the flesh," but each thorn means there are roses near, so I look for the roses in the difficulties.

I make it a rule to commence my lesson preparation on the afternoon of the Sunday previous. At that time the former lesson is fresh in my mind, so it does not require much bringing-up preparation, except to work out the connection in time and action, and the like, between the old lesson and the new one. I have found that I can get the best results by beginning and closing the week's preparation with straight Bible study and prayer, so the first thing on Sunday afternoon I have a moment of prayer—silent prayer if it is impossible to be alone—to ask for guidance and interpretation in the preparing of the lesson.

I then turn to my Bible. If the lessons are consecutive in reference to time and geography, and if it is not too long a space between the lessons, I read from the close of the former lesson through the next one. If the space between the two lessons is too long, I merely glance over it hurriedly, so as to get the general connection. I then reread the Scripture passage for the new lesson. Following this, I sit back and try to think for myself just what the lessons are, in the passage. I find it handy to make use of a pencil and scratch-paper to jot down my thoughts in a brief form.

Not until this time do I take up anything except my Bible. Now I turn to my Sunday-school teacher's quarterly and the copy of The Sunday School Times that contains the lesson. By glancing over my quarterly I am able to rearrange or reshape my own thoughts to harmonize with the central thought of the lesson.

My first thought in the Times is, "Say, Fellows—" department. This gets my mind running along like that of a boy. From this I turn to "The Lesson Pilot." I follow this closely with my Bible near at hand. I look up all the references that are made in the "Pilot," taking in "This Week's Teaching Principle," "The Lesson as a Whole," Dr. Smellie's discussion, "The One-Minute Mission Talk," "The Busy Men's Corner," and "The Illustration Round-Table."

I find that this gives me a good foundation. After finishing "The Lesson Pilot," I return to "The Illustration Round-Table" with my scissors. Not all of the illustrations are such as would interest boys, so I cut out only those that would appeal to them. Some of these illustrations I can use *verbatim*. Quite a few need to be given a boy coloring. Some I find give suggestions for boys' illustrations that I can make up myself. Before laying the paper aside I cut out the "Lesson Cartoon."

This finishes my Sunday preparations, except for a few minutes of thought as to whether I can think of good illustrations on the lesson in any book I have read. If I think of any I go to these books and reread the part that has the illustration to freshen it in my mind—taking brief notes if necessary.

From fifteen to thirty minutes are used each day—preferably in the evening, shortly before retiring—to give more thought to the Sunday-school lesson. During these times the Scripture passage, the background, and all the contemporary passages to the lesson are studied and organized for presentation. No paper that gives any thought or discussion to the lesson slips by without my glancing over it for some possible new suggestions.

The daily newspaper contributes to my prep-

aration for the lesson for the boys. My Sunday afternoon's work places the central thought and lessons from that one lesson in my mind. As I read the local newspaper from day to day I run on to many current events or local happenings that bear upon the thought of the lesson. I cut out each one of these and place them with my other illustrations and lesson material. Some murder, where an uncontrolled temper, jealousy, or the like, enters, furnishes a good illustration. Some big accomplishment by a local person or a national one furnishes illustrations. The sporting page of the paper gives the most illustrations. Every boy is a lover of sports, and a sport illustration means more to them than any other kind. An athlete who has made good through practice and training gives a vivid illustration, as well as the one who fails because of lack of training and dissipation.

During the week I try to think of some concrete thing I can take before the class as an illustration of some part of the lesson. For instance, when the lesson was on faith I took a peanut to class with me. I kept it in my pocket and then took it out, but left it concealed in my closed hand. I told the boys I had something in my hand that nobody had ever seen, and after opening the hand and showing it to them I would put it where nobody would ever see it again. Before opening

my hand I asked all the boys who had enough faith in my word to believe I had such a thing to raise their hands. A little over half raised their hands. I opened my hand and showed them the peanut. I shelled the nut and showed them the kernel, a thing that nobody had ever seen before. After showing it to all the boys I put it in my mouth and ate it and nobody has seen it since. Then I drove home the meaning of faith.

With all of this preparation I come up to Saturday night for the finale of it. Nothing can draw me away from my time on Saturday evening for finishing the preparation for the class of boys. I organize my material in such a manner that I can lay aside everything except my Bible, the lesson cartoon, and the concrete illustration, and yet go over the entire lesson in my mind. It is my endeavor to have a live illustration for starting the lesson besides about fifteen or twenty others for reserve during the lesson presentation. Never have I been obliged to use all of them, and I hope I never shall. In my mind is an outline of my own for the coming Sunday-school lesson.

V

HOW A BUSY MOTHER MANAGES

By Mrs. Ernest Planck

First there should be found some place where there is to be expected a reasonable degree of quiet and seclusion. Then if unavoidable distractions arise I try to let them only interrupt, not put a stop to the lesson preparation. When interruptions come, if we always go back, with patience and quietness of spirit, to the matter on hand, there is no real loss to us, because of them. On Sunday afternoon, while the lesson taught that morning is still fresh in mind, I read over the lesson for the following Sunday from my Bible, not making notes of any kind, simply letting the lesson "sink in." The next day, I pray, asking God to speak to me through his Word, as found in *this* lesson, and give me spiritual insight to understand the true meaning.

Immediately upon arising from this prayer I reread the lesson, having with me a pencil and tablet, which I use for making, in separate columns, a list of people, places and events men-

tioned therein, also of all the truths taught by the lesson, such as faith, obedience, loyalty, unselfishness. If there are mentioned any Oriental customs, unfamiliar places, persons, weights or measures, these are carefully hunted up and accurately fixed in my own mind—for what is obscure to the teacher will likely be more so to the average pupil. For such research a good Bible dictionary and maps are essential.

Next I read any related passages of Scripture which tell of the same happenings in a different way, perhaps, or which throw any light on the characters mentioned. For this a good harmony of the Gospels stays on my study table. Right here it might be well to suggest the keeping of your teaching tools in one place. This saves time and steps which might be necessary in going back and forth to your library.

At this stage I usually leave the lesson until the following day. Long periods of study are usually impossible in the life of a busy "mother worker," and by no means should the study of the Sunday-school lesson interfere with the daily quiet hour for personal devotional Bible study and prayer.

On the next day I choose from the various listed lesson truths the *one* truth which seems best suited to the individual needs of my class. Or perhaps, if there is known a special need of *one*

pupil, the lesson is built with this particular child in view. The other children often need the same thought impressed: Would it be well to emphasize the large importance of attempting to teach but *one* lesson truth rather than everything found in the lesson?

After the choice of the one truth to be taught the next problem is to think of some interesting way to catch the interest and attention of the class. I have found the keeping of a notebook, which is labeled "Points of Contact," very helpful in my own teaching experience. This book closely resembles a queer-looking scrapbook and is made up of possible points of contact which have occurred to me at various odd times, anything that is full of interest and appeal to the youthful mind and understanding. It is made up of clippings from various sources—newspapers, religious papers, some pictures, some short hero stories, bits of real life, but mostly incidents taken from the life and experience of my own children. Also illustrations from nature or plant life are very usable. As an example, in urging the giving of our whole selves to Jesus, not withholding lips for prayer service, hands or feet from loving service, or voice or talents, I once used two roses —one with long stem and green foliage and flower petals intact. From the other I gradually stripped everything, leaving only the bare stem

in its ugliness and uselessness. They soon saw what a poor gift the flower stripped of its parts made, and easily made the application in regard to the gift of their own bodies and members to Christ. They wanted to withhold nothing. Some of these illustrations I have never yet had occasion to use, but they are stored up for future reference, and when, because of sickness or trouble, the time for lesson preparation is curtailed, these are to me invaluable. There are many excellent similar illustrations available for every teacher to be found in the various lesson helps furnished in most schools. My object is to find one which is short, apt, and closely related to the spiritual truth to be impressed. Then I develop my lesson around this idea or picture or object, or even a question—for the point of contact may be any of these.

Then, with watch in hand, I go over the lesson as I expect to teach it, either silently or out loud —following the point of contact with a short résumé of the ground covered by the last few weeks' lessons, and including the historic setting and facts, having every question well planned with a view to its reaction on the pupil—reserving always sufficient time for a little blackboard suggestion—for the eye retains what the ear sometimes fails to retain. I emphatically believe in the regular use of the blackboard in the class-

room. Notebooks for the pupils, to be used in connection with such board work, are very good.

I vary little in my lesson preparation, but try always to *present* the lesson in a different way each week. Variety is certainly the spice of teaching. Also different lessons require such different handling. If there is half an hour allotted for the teaching of the lesson, plan the lesson so there will be a margin of time, of from five to ten minutes, free for discussion, for unexpected questions, personal difficulties and for seeing that the application of the lesson is clear enough to be, as our state worker, Mr. Leon C. Palmer, said: "Like the point of a joke, seen and not heard." And, last but not least, that there may be unhurried time at the close of the period for prayer. A sentence prayer from each member, the leader closing, is a good way. In this prayer I have frequently seen the pupils immediately apply the lesson truth to their own lives and needs. Such prayer results almost unfailingly in right action. Right thinking prompts right living. Ours is the task as co-workers with him to present right thoughts and ideals in an attractive way.

A well-studied, carefully, prayerfully prepared lesson can be taught in half the time that a haphazard one could be presented. The teacher should be so perfectly familiar with the lesson

that notes are unnecessary, yet I believe it is a good thing to take along to class a small card upon which the lesson outline has been jotted down. I rarely look at these teaching suggestions, and yet, should a young or inexperienced teacher be troubled with an unruly child or some unavoidable distractions, just a glance at this card will insure the progress of a well-ordered lesson.

But just a word of prayer before the starting of the lesson often prevents any disciplinary disturbance. It clinches the lesson and gives God a chance. Just even a moment of quiet waiting in silence together before God gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity for preparing the hearts of the class. However, it is well to have ready thought of some device for catching the wandering attention should there be restless minds or hands or eyes (or even *feet,* in a boys' class). Sometimes I carry slips of paper and very small pencils and have the pupils jot down certain things at my suggestion as the lesson progresses. Such as the good qualities of one character, the bad ones of another, or other characters having had similar experiences, or the places stopped at on a certain journey. If the lesson doesn't seem to "go" or take with the class I sometimes discard my cherished plan and dramatize the lesson. This is easier than it sounds, and if a part full of action

is given to the most troublesome child, I've never seen it fail to stimulate the interest and work off the surplus energy of boys and girls.

Another plan is occasionally to tell the lesson as a story, letting each member draw a picture illustrating the fact that most appeals to him. For those who simply *will* not or *cannot* draw, word pictures should suffice. Instead of "trying it on the dog," I occasionally have a lesson try-out on one of my own children. I notice carefully their reaction to the point of contact and questions prepared. My eleven-year-old son has often given me valuable suggestions as to suitable points of contact for boys. If he is interested, it is reasonable to suppose that others will be. If he says "Shucks, mother, *I* never would have done *that* if *I* had been there," into the trash basket goes my plan. The real key to the situation is, what he *would* have done or said, and around this is the new lesson planned.

May we not sum up the matter of lesson preparation in some such way as this:

RAYER
REPARATION
UNCTUALITY
LAN
ATIENCE
ERSEVERANCE
RAYER

VI

HOW A BUSY BUSINESS MAN MANAGES

By N. E. Carnine

I am a busy business man, but in the distribution of my time I have set aside certain definite periods each day of the week to prepare the Sunday-school lesson, and ordinary business matters and social engagements are not allowed to encroach upon them.

I am the teacher of a large organized class of wideawake boys of high school age. I am sensible of the responsibility resting on me and I would not have the courage to appear before them week after week but for the assurance of Divine help. To paraphrase a familiar expression, I aim to pray as though everything connected with my teaching depended upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit and then to work at my preparation as though everything depended upon myself.

The work on any particular lesson begins on Sunday afternoon, one week in advance. The first step is to read over the assigned passage of Scripture together with its historical setting until I

have it well in mind. During this stage of my preparation I make frequent reference to my Bible dictionary, concordance and commentary. Then I am ready for my various lesson helps, consisting of The Sunday School Times, several helps that are supplied by our school and others that I provide for myself. In fact, I read everything that I can find having any bearing on the lesson. As I do this preliminary reading I mark any passages that it seems probable I can make use of, using a system of marks which show at a glance whether the thought applies to the introduction, the closing, or some verse of the lesson. During this reading I am on the lookout for suitable illustrations that really illustrate. I have found that the boys are especially interested in current events and so I keep the lesson constantly in mind as I read the newspapers and magazines for any items that can be used in connection with the presentation of the Sunday-school lesson. Frequently I find some subject that necessitates my going to the public library for accurate, up-to-the-minute information.

In the pursuit of my regular business I take long automobile drives, and oftentimes alone. I find these trips an excellent time to thresh over the facts I have been gathering and getting them into shape. Even in the waking hours of the night my mind dwells on the lesson and it is then

that I get some of my most helpful suggestions. In short, I look upon my responsibility to my class of boys as the biggest thing in my life and I work at it practically all of my waking hours.

Let me say right here that one of my worst temptations is discouragement. The thought frequently comes to me that I am spending as much time in the preparation of my lessons as some ministers do on their sermons and yet with such poor results. Some of my most earnest efforts fall the flattest and seem to arouse only a passing interest in the minds of my boys. There is not a week that the devil does not suggest to me that the results of my teaching do not justify the effort, that someone else would do it easier and better. And so I fight this battle over and over again, but I am quite determined that, God helping me, I am going ahead, doing the best I can, just so long as it seems to be his will for me to do it.

By Thursday or Friday night, at the latest, I have completed my preliminary reading and then I take the whole evening to get my material together and to sort out what I want to use. My first concern is for a suitable opening or introduction that will grip and hold the attention of the boys from the start. This is of vital importance. On going into our classroom I am frequently conscious that the very air is charged with sup-

pressed excitement over some sport or school matter which the boys have been discussing as they congregate. Frequently I find it wise to get the subject of their excitement into the open and so let them discuss it for a moment, and then turn their thoughts to the lesson at the earliest opportunity.

I have no set plan for presenting the lesson. Sometimes I begin with a question that will start a friendly discussion, but always one that has a direct bearing on the lesson. Occasionally I start with a story, or an illustration, or some current event. This is the critical time of the lesson hour and the principal object in mind up to this time is to get the individual attention of each boy. I always stand when teaching so that I can see each face, and if at any time I feel that the attention of the class is slipping away from me, I endeavor to recover it with some unexpected question or a good illustration, of which I always plan to have a goodly number in reserve.

Having decided on a general plan for presenting the lesson, and on the introduction, I take up the lesson verse by verse, making a complete outline, but always providing more material than I expect to use. In this way I am usually prepared for any questions that the boys may ask.

The most profitable part of the hour is the close. I try to plan carefully to round up the

various lesson thoughts and to make the proper applications. I am especially careful not to "preach" at my boys. They will not always take it kindly from a parent or teacher. It is better to let the boys do that themselves. A few judicious questions will usually bring out the desired application from the boys. They not only do it well, but they seem to enjoy doing it.

In preparing an outline of the lesson I have no set place for prayer. Sometimes we have it at opening if the "atmosphere" is favorable. Occasionally we have a season of prayer, several of the boys leading, but my experience has been that it is nearly always more effective at the close. Now and then boys of this age will ask questions that no human being can answer. In such cases I prefer to say frankly that I don't know and don't know how to find out except to ask God about it, and right there have a definite prayer asking God to show us the answer if he wants us to have it. This is in line with my constant policy to encourage the boys to pray over everything that affects their lives such as their studies, their sports and other details.

The primary object of my teaching is to bring each boy to an acceptance of Jesus Christ and to the giving of his life to Christian service. I feel that any lesson is a failure that does not present these fundamental facts in some convincing way.

VII

GAINING BY EARLY PREPARATION

By Lucy C. Stone

Being a business woman, with household duties besides, the first problem was, "How can I find the time necessary to the careful preparation of the Sunday-school lesson?"

In the evenings there are too many duties, too many distractions and interruptions. I cannot find time for anything more than my daily Bible reading and study, which does not take the place of the lesson study nor vice versa.

For years, therefore, I have set apart my Sunday afternoons for this purpose. The only friends who are likely to call on me Sundays know and respect my habit and I very seldom allow anything to interfere with my purpose.

As soon as the dinner work is out of the way I sit down with my Bible, Sunday School Times and Sunday School Teacher, with my reference books close at hand. I *separate* myself from everything else and "take no note of time" until I have thoroughly mastered my lesson. I usually

finish by six-thirty or seven, but sometimes it is eight o'clock before I am ready to stop.

Saturday evening I take out my notebook, go carefully over my notes, pick out any reference material required and make any necessary memoranda and write out the home questions. Then I lay everything in order under my Bible, with my collection on top, feeling that with spindle and distaff ready God will surely send the flax.

This plan of preparing the lesson complete at one sitting, and that a whole week in advance, may not be altogether ideal, but it has its advantages:

First. A lesson thus prepared is not affected by any unlooked-for or hindering circumstances during the week.

Second. The Spirit of God's day is a great aid in the study of his Word, and more can be accomplished in the same length of time.

That this plan requires perseverance and not a little sacrifice is perhaps one of the elements which enter into its success.

"Does it pay?" In my own case I can testify that it has paid "an hundredfold" on the investment; the blessing has been not alone to my class, but to the teacher as well, and I commend it to the busy person who finds it a difficult matter to find the time for lesson study.

Sample page from my lesson notebook:

February 12th, Lesson 7

Healing of Naaman

With today's lesson several new characters are introduced:

Naaman (meaning Grace or Pleasantness).

Little Maid.

Servants.

Jessie—What kind of a man was Naaman?

Adele—Tell us something about leprosy.

(Two million lepers in the world today)

Naaman was rich, honored, the king's favorite, BUT there is a But in almost every life. His was an envious position, BUT who would be a leper? There is help for Naaman, but it comes from an unexpected source.

A little maid.

A captive maid. (A *little* maid, but big enough to grasp a big opportunity.)

Marian—What idea do you form of this little maid? (How many worshipers of Jehovah were left? See 1 Kings 19:18.) This little maid was one of the seven thousand. She was faithful, courageous, sweet-spirited.

Suppose you had been carried captive into a heathen land, would you have kept your faith? Would you have overcome circumstances or would circumstances have overcome you?

She might have said: "I am such a little girl and a captive, it is of no use for me to speak."

(Illustration, Sunday School Times, page 64.)

What is the result? Letter and gift. (Fifty to seventy thousand dollars and ten changes of raiment.)

What effect does the letter have upon the king of Israel?

Elisha comes to the rescue.

What is his *purpose?* (Verse 8.)

Elisha might have said, "I cannot help because: 1. Naaman is not a Jew. 2. He is an enemy. 3. He is afflicted with a loathsome disease."

To one who is *not a Christian,* any one of these reasons would have been sufficient for withholding help.

To one *who is a Christian* they constitute the reasons for giving it.

Elisha's word to "wash seven times."

Marian—Why "seven" times?

Leprosy a *type of sin. Naaman's* cure *and ours* is *only* through obedience. (Central truth.)

VIII

A LEAF FROM A TEACHER'S NOTE BOOK

By Mrs. Eric Lewis

My time is very limited, as I have a very large household to care for, and missionary interests are also very dear to my heart and take up most of my spare moments and energies. I have found that the best time to prepare my Sunday-school lesson is half an hour in the morning, just before rising. Perfect quiet, no interruptions, soul and body refreshed and renewed by sleep, one's mind is ready to assimilate the good things The Sunday School Times offers. The little effort it costs is repaid a thousand times by what one gets, food and thought for one's own need, and help and inspiration to teach the class.

After reading the lesson itself I generally start by reading through carefully all the lesson helps from the "Lesson Pilot" to the "Boys' Class," also any leading article in The Sunday School Times bearing on the same subject.

My class consists of girls from fourteen to sixteen years of age, all going to high school.

As I read I aim to select material which will suit the type of mind my class represents and as I proceed I make a pencil mark on the margin whenever I come across an idea that strikes me as being helpful or of interest to my girls.

I am learning to classify these marks under three main headings, *A, B, C*. *A*. Geography and historical background. *B*. Incident and character. *C*. Spiritual application. Thus, proceeding from article to article, I often find the same fact or truth presented from varied angles, supplying me with a wealth of material, making the lesson more helpful and attractive. Also I am careful to look up the Scripture references, underlining for my use those that strike me as most valuable.

Whenever applicable in the lesson I look out for Bible illustrations and comparisons to stimulate thinking and to implant Bible knowledge. I am also on the lookout for illustrations in any book or magazine that I may be reading at any time during the week.

To read through The Sunday School Times' pages on the lesson takes me about three or four mornings. During the day, while I am busy at work cooking, sewing, or gardening, I digest and assimilate a great deal of what I have been reading.

Toward the end of the week I start to write out an outline of the lesson in my notebook, which

I keep for this purpose. It is a thin notebook with a stiff cover, one which will easily slip inside the cover of my Scofield Reference Bible, which I always use when preparing my lesson.

Under each of the main headings I gather up all the ideas I have selected from the various lesson helps, underlining anything of special importance. I transfer to my notebook from the S. S. Times the Scripture references which I have underlined, each under one or other of the above headings.

Thus I find that all my notes are in good order, each thought in its right place; and when the time for teaching has come I can see at a glance how to proceed.

This idea of classifying has only come to me gradually. I used to glean all the information I could, but it was a confused jumble in my mind, and to put it down in my notebook I found a most difficult task.

The classified notes make the teaching on Review Sunday quite easy: turning over my notebook, page by page, each lesson will come back to my mind quite readily, and with the many suggestions The Sunday School Times offers on Review Lessons it is not difficult to prepare a set of questions embracing the whole quarter's lessons.

Another aim I have in preparation is to keep the outline of the whole quarter before the mind

of the class; for instance, Paul's four missionary journeys, the history of Israel, the history of Judah. For that purpose I find that showing and explaining charts from time to time is a very great help. I have been using "Arnold's Chart of Paul's Journeyings" and the "Chart of Jewish National History" by Byington. The interest awakened by these charts and the intelligent grasp of the whole thus conveyed were encouraging to see and demonstrated that their use was well worth while.

The Bible maps are also a great help. To find the places mentioned in the lesson is an exercise the girls love. It often makes the lesson far more comprehensible and real; for instance, in the lesson, "Hezekiah Leads His People Back to God," from 2 Chronicles 30:1-27, the king's proclamation was made from Beersheba to Dan. How little the significance of this would dawn upon the scholar's mind unless he looked it up on the map. At a review lesson on the history of Israel I made the girls tell me what happened in the following places: Shechem, Cherith, Zarephath, Carmel, Horeb, Jordan, Shunem, Samaria, Nineveh, Tarshish. How surprised they all were to find that Tarshish was in Spain and that Jonah meant to go all that long way!

One more aim I have in teaching, and that to my mind is the most important of all. With every

lesson I endeavor to emphasize the greatest of all facts, the person of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and the Bible the story of our salvation. These precious truths can be woven into every lesson by keeping it in mind when preparing the message. I was greatly encouraged in doing this when I learned from a friend who had heard an address by Dr. Campbell Morgan to Sunday-school teachers that he had put great emphasis on this point.

While writing this paper it has occurred to me that perhaps the best way to illustrate my classified notes would be to copy out of my notebook one of my lessons. For this purpose I have chosen the lesson on Ezekiel, the Watchman of Israel, Ezekiel 2:1 to 3:27. At a first glance an abstract lesson like that looks difficult to teach to young girls; also the prophet Ezekiel is an obscure, I might safely say unknown, person to them; so is the book and its teaching, so that the subject does not look very attractive till one really studies it and then I found The Sunday School Times helps threw a flood of light on it to me and I became very much interested myself.

These are my notes:

Ezekiel, the Watchman of Israel
Ezekiel 2:1 to 3:27

Geography—Describe Nebuchadnezzar's prison camp (3:15), forty-five miles southeast of Baby-

lon. Plain of Mesopotamia. River Chebar (modern name Kabor) empties into the Euphrates. Ezekiel lived in his own house (3:24). He was married (24:16-18.)

History—Ezekiel's deportation ten years before final ruin (2 Kings 24:14). He knew the nobles of Jerusalem. He knew Daniel (14:14). Ezekiel's writings prove that he was a mature man.

Character and Work—Ezekiel's message was to the whole house of Israel as well as Judah, both in captivity. Twofold ministry (revealing sin), (raising hope of future glory). Son of Man—This title is mentioned ninety times. One of themselves. Qualified to succor them. Stand upon thy feet—Alert, courageous, faithful, forgetting his sorrow.

Spiritual Application—"I will speak unto thee." (Are we willing to hear?) Then the Spirit entered—Energy from above. Two sources of strength (God's Spirit), (God's Word). (Acts 1:8.) "Watchman": a lighthouse pointing out danger, peril. "Impudent and stiff-hearted children." The Bible knows how to say it (Heb. 4:12). God's love for the wicked (Ezek. 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9; John 3:16).

Illustrations—God's calls and men's answers. Isaiah, who volunteers. Jeremiah, who is timid, till strengthened by God's promise. Moses, who

raises many objections, but finally does his work. Jonah, who runs away from duty, but is made willing through trial. Paul, who asks, "What shall I do?"

Golden Text—Round-Table illustration: Why men drown.

IX

UNTIL THE LESSON GETS THE TEACHER

By Mrs. J. M. Roberts

Whether the lesson is taken from Genesis or Revelation, the Law or the Prophets, the Gospels or the Epistles, the message is the same: Jehovah —God; Jesus—the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

With this background I get a view of the lessons for the year, then the period, then the quarter as a whole, then the lesson for the week, which I read over and over until I get the lesson and the lesson gets me.

After I feel I know the text, or rather the record, pretty well, I read Dr. Ellis' teaching principle in The Sunday School Times; not having had training as a teacher, I have been helped greatly by Dr. Ellis' article, often simply for the assurance that I was on the right track. I have found my instinct was usually correct, but it has been helpful to know the scientific principles.

I have found charts and maps to be invaluable, not only for information, but for creating interest

in the study of the Bible. During this year's study of Israel and Judah we have used Byington's Chart of Jewish National History, several girls asking permission to take it home for study. We also used maps of Judah and Israel, and one of the Roman Empire. I try to have the geography very clear in my own mind, so as to spend very little time on it; it is a point of interest of course, but not *the* point of interest.

Studying, as I do, for a class of girls, I have not found it amiss to study the dictionary. I am quite sure it has been one of the seemingly small things which has gained for me the respect of a class of high school girls, college girls and teachers; the fact that when the necessity presents itself I can give the various shades of meaning, the distinction with the difference. I have found it invaluable to read with great regard to inflection and emphasis. I have read and reread, and read again and again, some lessons, or verses, or parts of verses, getting all I could out of them, putting all I could into them, and then reading to the girls without any comment and leaving it with them with a prayer that the Holy Spirit would use his power to convince and convert.

I have been obliged to study higher criticism, because my girls were under the influence of professors of that type, and I have had to know how to meet it for them. I have had to study to know

how to help them to be able to give a reason for the faith and hope that was in them, or would be in them if it were not destroyed by ungodly men.

As to the application of the lesson, it depends upon the lesson itself and I often find my best plan is to drive the lesson home with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will get in his good work and each girl make the application needed in her own case.

X

SECURING CLASS PREPARATION

By Ruth Clark

A young professor of anatomy was asked how he was getting along with his teaching. "Very well," he replied; "I manage to keep one bone ahead of my class." And so I try to keep at least one lesson ahead to properly assign the next lesson. A wise teacher gets a bird's-eye view of the quarter, or better, of the year, in order to have a definite aim in teaching. Otherwise each lesson is a unit to itself with no idea of its relation to the whole, and my students may have a vague disconnected conception of the wonderful plan of salvation as revealed in God's Word.

In planning my lesson, the first thing to consider is the *assignment.* That has to be given a week in advance. Some problem is to be given, some parts of the lesson to certain members of the class that they may work out, something that will arouse their interest to effort or will drive them to the study of the lesson. It dampens my ardor to have pupils come with no preparation.

I try to find some week-day activity for my assignment along with my problem. I plan a committee to look into certain questions and appoint one that can be depended upon.

Spiritual Preparation—In preparing the lesson it is easy, when time is limited, to leave out the most important part and flee to the "Helps." I find that my class and I suffer alike if I do not prepare myself spiritually. I must be in the right attitude toward the Heavenly Father, toward my work and my pupils. I must know there is nothing between him and myself. There must be no sin in my life to separate me from the love of God. I want to realize that I am a co-worker with Christ. I want to know the wonder of it—that it is a high calling that I am to be a helper in the salvation or development of a soul. Each one is precious in his sight.

I turn to passages in the Word that give me this conception. It is his Word and his work. I familiarize myself with his wonderful promises and pray that they may be realized in my own heart and life. There is no room for discouragement now.

The Study of the Text—I read over the text three times, praying that the Spirit may speak to my own heart through the Word that I may know myself. I cannot expect to teach truths that I haven't applied to my own heart and life.

I cannot give out any more than I have. I read the text to get it as a whole, then I go over it, again dividing it up and finding out what each verse speaks to me. By the third time I have digested it. There has been a lesson for me to learn and I am prepared to prayerfully plan my lesson. I have prayed over it. Now I must pore over it.

Helps—I read all the *safe* helps I can find to throw light on the text, as I wish to rightly divide the Word of truth. I use the Authorized, Revised and Scofield editions of the Bible with their references and notes, a Bible dictionary, my own lesson helps by my church, and The Sunday School Times. As I read these over I mark the striking comments and illustrations, the explanation of difficult passages, the historical setting—the most attractive outline. I read lesson plans. I may not be able to adopt them, but I may adapt them to my class.

So I go through various steps. I carry around with me my written plan. During the spare moments at home, on the corner waiting for the car, I familiarize myself with it. There must be no hesitancy or uncertainty of statements in the classroom. I must have everything at my tongue's end. There will have to be some "boiling down" for the short lesson period.

Material Ready—My preparation has not

ended here. I go to Sunday-school a half hour before time to see that everything is in order. I place my lesson materials where I can lay my hands on them. The blackboard, chalk and eraser are at my command. Nothing is to be looked for during the Sunday-school hour. I may have a committee to help me in this work, but I am there to oversee and guide.

XI

IN THE QUIET OF EARLY MORNING

By Mattie H. Leake

My helps, besides a Scofield Reference Bible, are The Sunday School Times, The Moody Bible Institute Monthly, and Serving and Waiting. These three publications contain the International Sunday-school lessons.

I rise at four or five o'clock on Sunday morning while all around me is still and I am entirely alone.

After spending a few minutes refreshing myself, I kneel down and pray for help.

If the lesson seems vague and difficult I tell the Lord so in language I should use to a friend of whom I was asking help, and make plain wherein the difficulties lie.

Sometimes a lesson is so full and rich that I am at a loss what to omit. This also I bring to the Lord and ask for direction.

A Sunday-school lesson is not worth my time and effort unless it advances us in grace or knowledge, or both, and so I present my class before

the Lord as subjects of his love, and whose needs are known only to him. I pray to him for cleansing that he may fill me with his Spirit for that particular lesson and thus enable me to teach that which he desires for my class (women from thirty to forty years of age).

My first step after this is to read carefully Howard A. Banks and the Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas in The Sunday School Times, P. B. Fitzwater in The Moody Monthly, and William L. Pettingill in Serving and Waiting.

As I read these I mark with a pencil everything that is new and helpful preparatory to my final preparation, when I reach the lesson itself.

This reading and pencil marking I do thoughtfully and but once, and follow it up with a close reading of the lesson with context for the first time, observing, as I do so, the pencil markings I have mentioned. (I wish to say here that the excellent treatments mentioned so illuminate my course of study when I take up the lesson in detail that I have always received more on the lesson than I can condense within the time allotted to teach it, and I leave my class later with leftovers for another time—and this has been the case especially with those lessons referred to before which were at first vague and difficult.)

With my Bible open to the lesson, and with these helps spread before me, and with a few

small leaves of paper upon which to make my notes for references, I proceed to prepare my lesson for teaching.

My first step is an introduction, which consists in correlating the lesson with the previous one, important references to the leading personages in the lesson, mention of significant features, and locations with use of a map or blackboard, worthwhile information concerning the writer of the book in which the lesson is given and his relation to the lesson theme and to the people. Two minutes are required to deliver the introduction.

My second outline is the setting of the lesson and consists of the events or circumstances that occasion it, the time and place, and the acting person or persons concerned. One minute is sufficient for this.

Now I take the lesson just as the members of the class are supposed to have it before them and begin a verse-by-verse study of it, jotting down carefully from my pencil markings in The Sunday School Times and the Moody Monthly and Serving and Waiting everything that is new and that helps in the interest of the subject. To these I add also narratives, incidents, or anything that chances to my mind that may contribute to the lesson.

I number each verse in my notes and make it a separate paragraph of itself. To this para-

graph I note down all helps on that verse which I have marked in the above publications. Thus I continue through, verse by verse, until the lesson is done.

And so, with a copy of the lesson and my notes in my hands, when I come into the presence of my class there is no confusion and no time wasted. I keep with the class and they keep with me.

In my preparation of the lesson in detail I constantly have need for Scripture references. At the point in my notes (and the lesson) where such references are needed I indicate on my notes the book, chapter and verse thus: (1) John 3:2. On a slip of paper I write the same thing and hand it to some member of my class, who at once finds the verse and puts the slip at the place in such a way that she may instantly open to it. When I call for that number (1) to be read she reads it and no time is lost. Any number of references may be used in this way with good effect. It adds interest. When a Scripture reference is read in the presence of the class by a member of the class it has greater weight than if simply quoted by the teacher.

Not infrequently I gather current events through the week, which I file and which help by way of illustrations.

I also make use of narratives, instances and experiences which I have read and heard. If I

fail to remember these I can sometimes bring an illustration from my own small storehouse.

The Golden Text is always good. Sometimes it seems to stand by itself. Then I treat it by itself, bringing other Scripture to bear upon it. Again, its place precedes the lesson and I take it first. Usually it fits into some particular verse or some set place which, of course, determines its relation in the lesson.

Finally I go thoughtfully through the whole lesson from first to last in search for the lessons and comfort and warnings to be found; and I endeavor to emphasize those which will lead the class to discover and appropriate to themselves benefits to be derived.

These questions and suggestions I write down and present in such a way as to induce the class to do the talking.

My notes consist of only short sentences or phrases or words. They are only reminders, but they are carefully selected.

My preparation for teaching is now finished.

It is eight o'clock and I have an hour left.

XII

KNOWING MORE THAN MAY BE NEEDED

By A. Louise Ebersbach

Preparation for teaching the lesson begins years before the teacher stands before a class. Her preparation lies fundamentally in her experience of God. Has she experienced some of the self-sacrifice so common in the lives of those characters of the Bible about whom she is teaching? Has she experienced the power of prayer which made strong the courage of the apostles? Does she find in God the strength to be fearless, the courage to speak truth, a solace in sorrow, a fortress in discouragement and temptation? If she does not have such an experience she cannot hope to make real to others the lives of the heroic men and women of the Bible whose lives are a testimony of God's infinite power.

If this basic preparation exists, then the details of preparation will be easily taken care of.

I find it desirable at the very beginning of the week to read carefully and thoughtfully the text of the lesson for the next Sunday. I have it in

mind for the rest of the week. I can choose from daily experiences, from my reading, or from a speaker, thoughts appropriate to the lesson and which help to make the lesson clear and real. I am often surprised how many helpful thoughts I find this way.

Later in the week I take time to read a number of chapters in the same book, preceding and following the lesson text. If I can find the time I read the entire book in which the lesson appears. A fragment from any book, I find, does not contain the meaning which comes from reading the entire book. With the lesson set in the place where it belongs we can estimate its importance and we get a meaning which would have remained hidden did we not know the circumstances leading up to it and the results following.

If the lesson deals with some certain character I like to read the entire biography of that person in all the books where a record of him appears. After that I try to read something he has written, if he is a writer. We find the proof of Solomon's wisdom in his proverbs more than in the record of his life. In the same way St. Paul becomes a living person because we can read the letters he has written.

After this thorough Bible reading I turn to other books for help, but this reading always comes first.

In using other books I refer, first, to one which gives general information concerning the book in which the lesson appears. I try to find such facts as the following: when the book was written, under what circumstances, by whom, and for what purpose. I next try to learn something about the author. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John read like new books to me since I know something about the life and characteristics of these men. This information can be had from any good Bible dictionary or commentary. I find the Encyclopedia Britannica valuable for a scholarly and exhaustive treatment of these subjects.

I like to turn to the works of the Hebrew historian, Josephus, for his account of the events which appear in the lesson text. His account is essentially the same as that found in the Bible, but often his wording is so different that I find his account illuminating.

I prepare the lesson exposition in this manner. I strive to give real information in this exposition and to throw such light on the portion of the Scripture studied from Sunday to Sunday that the Sunday-school scholar may come to read his Bible with new meaning and delight.

This exposition I follow by a selection of teaching points from the lesson. I choose only two or three points out of a single lesson. More than this number serve only to confuse the mind of

the scholar. These big points I emphasize by illustrations. These can be gathered from a large number of sources: one's own experiences; stories told by friends; illustrations from great Bible characters other than the one being studied; illustrations from the life of Christ; from Nature; and from observation of children. I also use the biographies of men and women, particularly the biographies of great Christian characters. I also use stories from the Great War and stories of faith and self-sacrifice from mission lands.

I sometimes use a good story at the beginning of the lesson to gain the attention of the class. This I sometimes vary by use of a question or questions which the members of the class can answer in unison. For example: in studying Daniel's interpretation of the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, I asked the class what they all thought about when Daniel was mentioned. Everyone answered, "Daniel in the lions' den." I then told them the story in the lesson was one less frequently told than the one about Daniel in the lions' den. I found they listened attentively to this less common story about Daniel. Sometimes I use an appropriate picture to gain attention. Sometimes I use the lesson cartoon clipped from The Sunday School Times.

I find if the teacher is prepared to give illuminating information about the lesson the class is

eager enough for Biblical knowledge to make unnecessary the question "how to hold attention."

The big teaching points which I have already mentioned and which I amplify with illustrations I drive home by application to world, national, community, church, or individual problems. Here is where I find the help of the class valuable. I try to be prepared to make my own applications, but I also give the class the opportunity to make applications. I find very often these are more practical and worth-while than my own. If the application made by the class is too general or left hanging in air, I try to supply the "driving home" force. It is here that I find one's experience of God must be used. The only "driving home" force I know anything about is a personal experience of God's power in one's life.

If time for questions is given, I find that the extensive detailed preparation outlined here usually gives me the necessary information.

I always like to be prepared to close the lesson with some particularly inspiring thought. I may use a story, a parable or passage from the teaching of Jesus, a beautiful poem, or a prayer.

After I have made all possible preparation from other sources I turn last of all to my Sunday School Times. I read all it has to say about the lesson. There I find reiterated, and therefore emphasized, some of the information I have gotten

from other sources. I also find there material I have not found elsewhere. I find illustrations to add to those I already have, or to substitute for some not so good. I depend on this reading of the Times for confidence in teaching the lesson.

I always prepare notes to use in my teaching. These I hold inside my Bible and refer to only when absolutely necessary. I try to make my preparation so thorough that I need not hesitate for the next thought. I try also to have at hand more material than I will use. I have known the force of teaching to be lost because the teacher did not know her subject well enough to proceed without hesitation or stumbling and because she did not have enough material to fill the entire lesson period.

These are the mechanics of preparation to teach the lesson. The life of the teaching depends upon the praying the teacher does before she comes before her class. I always pray that my heart may be open to receive a message which I can give, then I go on, for I know God will take care of the rest.

XIII

BODILY FITNESS FOR THE WORK

By Lewis Keast

There is the preparation of the body that has a direct bearing on our preparation of the lesson. Saturday evening I call my own. If possible, I keep all special engagements away. To be fit on Sunday I begin on Saturday—more truly I would say on Monday morning. A good teacher needs a sound body. Good health is an invaluable asset in teaching.

I give some attention to my person. It does not mean that we are vain because we are clean. To gain and hold the respect of my class I find it necessary to wear a clean collar and keep my tie straight. These may seem minor matters, but they do matter.

The thought concerning physical preparation leads me to speak of my mental preparation, for aside from the special preparation and study of the lesson there is a very definite preparation of the mind. I try not to be hurried in my work, and I find this helps the mind exceedingly. Men-

tal processes take time and the study of the Sunday-school lesson is no exception. I find it helps not only to retire at a reasonable hour on Saturday evening, but to arise in good time on Sunday morning. After an earnest season of prayer I review my notes on Sunday morning.

I have found it to be of considerable advantage to be in class a few minutes before the opening of the school. Through these moments of social intercourse I discover what the class is thinking about. Oftentimes I find an open door into their hearts by connecting up with the things that are uppermost in their minds. This little social period is one of the final periods of my preparation.

XIV

LIVING WITH THE LESSON ALL THE WEEK

By Mrs. F. N. Coward

There was only one way for me to do if I were to teach a proper lesson to an adult class, the majority of the members of which were students at the Normal College.

My life was so full, housekeeping and home-making for three grown children and three or four boarders, that at first I thought I could not do it, but—dare I refuse? So, as I said, there was only one thing to do, and that was to just live with the lesson from Monday to Sunday. To do this the Daily Bible Readings are a help, and at family prayers on Monday I could get my first thoughts on the Bible verses, and later look up the Golden Text and try to grasp the main message of the passage. I use a Scofield Reference Bible, and probably there would be notes and references to study, until the whole context of the passage would be clear to me.

As soon as I started the course I prepared a

large map, and some weeks there would be new names to enter.

On Tuesday or Wednesday I would start to read the lesson helps of The Sunday School Times; not just the adult lesson by any means. There are good points in every section, down to the Primary Lesson and "Little Jetts," that can be turned to account in framing an outline. As I read I marked with a pencil in case the end of the week should prove especially busy, and it be necessary to save time in rereading.

(Just here I should like to add my word of thanks for such really splendid lesson helps for busy people. Certainly the helps in The Sunday School Times go far to prove that the International Lesson series can be adapted to all ages.)

Nearly every week there have been other articles in the paper giving light on the lesson topics, either from a historical or prophetical standpoint, and usually what should be of great interest to an adult class; of course I studied those. I also have a Teachers' Monthly from the Sunday-school, and read through the lesson in it, and in the "Wesleyan." I took care also to read the Adult Class Monthly so that I could draw the attention of the class to anything special that I felt they should note.

Fortunately I am a quick reader, for indeed I have little time, but it is wonderful how one is

helped out. So often one will come across illustrations suitable for the lesson in unexpected quarters. The Children's Newspaper (Arthur Mee, London) has often helped me with one or more, and even our own small News will now and then furnish a point. The great thing is to have the lesson in your mind all the time. The Bible itself often furnishes the best illustrations. Types of character, scenes, and incidents in one part of the Book illustrate something of the same nature in another part, while in the last series of lessons, of falling thrones, sieges and famines, and their causes, one has only to turn to up-to-date history.

The lesson story should have a very real and vivid portrayal even in adult classes. No class is ever too "adult" to enjoy a story, and then, these are days of Bible ignorance, and it does not do to take it for granted that your class is familiar with the story for the day. (I should rather like to know how many "adult" teachers found their class familiar with the really fine story of Ebed-melech, the man of the black skin, but the white heart.)

Yes, the story must be real and living! To so many the Bible is not even as real as a school history. Did Jeremiah really live? Was he ever a baby, and then a boy, and then a man? How old was he when he began to find out that fear can give us worse pain than the thing we fear?

How many of our brave soldiers had to conquer sheer physical fear? Some of the very bravest and the doers of the bravest deeds. Yes! well! but—Jeremiah? Anyway, I myself have to acknowledge that with this series of lessons and lesson helps Jeremiah is a far more living character to me.

Dr. Adolph Saphir's book, "Christ and Israel," has helped in the forward look of some lessons. "The Old and New are one." The whole Old Testament, the guarantee of the mission to the heathen, says, "the idols shall be utterly destroyed." "The New Testament, the book of the church based upon the old, breathes the promises of the old, and says all Israel shall be saved." When Mrs. Askew put at the head of her lesson to girls, in The Sunday School Times, "End of Judah's history as a free nation; end of Jerusalem's glory; end of David's line of kings; end of Solomon's glorious temple—but not the end of God's love and care," it linked up at once for an adult class the study of the remnant as given in the Scofield Bible notes, and the remembrance of some three hundred converted Jews who are at the present day ministers of Protestant churches.

In the paragraph announcing this competition on "How I Prepare," it adds, "securing of interest at the start, and driving home the application." This seems to me to be more in connec-

tion with the next subject, "How I Teach the Lesson." However, I may say that in my class we started with a very brief reference or résumé of the previous Sunday's lesson, given by one of the members. Then if a period of history was omitted between the two lessons this was bridged over briefly by another member. We then started in on the lesson verses for the day, taking them up one at a time.

Sometimes I built on the Golden Text as foundation, as for example, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Other times it seemed to lend itself best as application, such as Isaiah's response, "Here am I, send me."

Having gathered all the material I could in the little time at my disposal through the week, on Saturday evening I wrote an outline, in ink, on a piece of paper that would lie on the page of my Bible. I knew the lesson, and only brief notes were necessary. But they helped to keep me from missing a strong point and from rambling on to side lines. I have used the word "gathered" in speaking of lesson material, and this is a true description. I often think of the old story of gathering the manna—"they that gathered little had no lack, and they that gathered much had nothing over." The dear Lord acts that way still with some of us who have so few spare minutes, but who long to serve him.

Have I said all? If I had I might have prepared a good history lesson. But I did not want to teach history; I wanted to teach spiritual truths, truths that were life-giving and character-building. I needed more than material. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." We speak not in words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth—and the demonstration—the making plain—of all spiritual truth is the work of the Holy Spirit. *Prayer is the chief factor in the preparation of a Sunday-school lesson.*

My "Normals" have dispersed to all parts of the province. No one of them told me of any blessing that had come to them from the Sunday-school classes. But I have sown some seed and the seed is "the word of God," and when that Word goes forth it will accomplish that which God pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sends it.

XV

LOOKING AHEAD AND AROUND

By William J. Hart, D. D.

A lesson cannot be successfully taught without adequate preparation for the particular lesson of that date. Training, experience and vocation cannot be substituted for careful preparation. The Sunday-school teacher who does his full duty must be diligent in preparing to meet his class from week to week.

1. The *far view*—It is a good thing to look ahead as far as possible and thus see what is coming. In this way one's mind will be gradually prepared for the several subjects to be discussed, and the available material coming under observation can be preserved for use when the date of the lesson arrives to which this is related. It is a good thing to know the cycle of years planned by the International Sunday School Lesson Committee, the groupings of the subjects for the several years, and the three-month periods into which each year is divided. All this can be learned from the year's "Lesson Calendar," pub-

lished by The Sunday School Times Company. This I purchase each year and keep conveniently near for consultation.

2. The *reading of the text* of the lesson—From week to week I read the printed portions assigned, and then I read the additional passages of the lesson, which, though designated, are not printed in any of the "helps." Also I plan to read the connecting passages and other suggested portions of the Bible. For this purpose, of course, I read the Bible—usually the American Standard Version. Then, in addition to the Authorized Version, I use any other versions which may be available.

It is of great value, I find, to have a little volume containing the printed text of the lessons for the year. This I keep in my pocket and take it with me if I am traveling on the train or am going away from home. Such a volume can be consulted in odd moments, at home or elsewhere, and helps to keep the lesson in mind. For this purpose one may find several little volumes, prepared by different authors, usually published in the autumn for the coming year, and selling for sums ranging from twenty-five to fifty cents.

3. The consultation of *commentaries and books* related to the lesson—Having read the lesson, perhaps several times, and possibly the whole of the particular book of the Bible from which it is

taken, and having looked up some passages to which reference is made and other corresponding passages, I use whatever commentaries I can find in my library. Bible dictionaries and works on introduction I also consult. If I happen to be living where there is a good library I sometimes go to the library the latter part of the week and run through anything I can locate there. (The public library of the city of Utica, New York, which is especially well equipped for the Sunday-school teacher's work, groups the books conveniently and places the periodicals related to Sunday-school lessons and teaching within easy reach; and also affords a quiet place for study with chairs, desks and other inviting features for making notes.)

4. Reading the *notes in publications* on the Sunday-school lesson—Every teacher should consult the publications of his own denomination. This I naturally do. The Sunday School Times is an old friend, as I began to subscribe for it when I was a theological student in New Jersey more than a quarter of a century ago, and have taken it continuously from that time. The products of some other publishing houses are also very illuminating. The brief, concise notes found in religious publications I find quite valuable, though these are not sufficient of themselves for the detailed explanation of the lesson.

XVI

TEACHING AS A LIFE-AND-DEATH MATTER

By T. T. Martin

I begin the preparation of the lesson Sunday afternoon for the following Sunday, that I may have time to make careful preparation, and that I may have time during the week to meditate on the lesson and gather added material to use in teaching it.

My plan has been, first, to bring myself to realize that what I am going to study is really God's Word, a real message from God to man, a real revelation from God, authenticated by hundreds of fulfilled prophecies; that I am going to prepare to teach a real, actual message from God to man; that I am to teach this real message from God to responsible beings who will spend eternity in heaven or in hell; that by faithful teaching I may lead those whom I shall teach who are lost, who have not received the Saviour as their Redeemer who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity (Titus 2:13, 14), to

be saved, to spend eternity in heaven; and that by unfaithful teaching I may leave them to spend eternity in hell.

Second, I then bow in prayer and pray our Father in heaven that the Holy Spirit may teach me, because the Saviour promised that the Spirit would be our teacher.

I then take a sheet of paper and divide it between the verses of the lesson, leaving space for writing down the lessons learned from each verse. I then study the Scripture lesson verse by verse, and write down on my sheet of paper, under each verse, the lessons learned from that verse. For instance, if the lesson were the Twenty-third Psalm, I would have on my sheet of paper:

Verse 1. 1. "SHEPHERD." The protection and life of the sheep depends on the shepherd, not on the sheep.

2. "THE LORD is my shepherd"—not my church, nor my baptism, nor my good life, nor my moral character.

3. "Is"—not "will be when I die," but here and now. "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John 3:36).

4. "MY"—a personal matter. Is he yours?

5. "NOT WANT."—I may not have all I would like to have, but "I shall not want."

6. "SHALL NOT."—It is absolutely certain.

7. "I."—Not people in general, but a personal

matter. Oh, is he yours? Will you let him be? Will you accept him as yours here and now?

All this being true, then from love for such a shepherd let us live faithful, true, consecrated lives.

Having studied the Scripture lesson closely, and realizing that the Holy Spirit, the Great Teacher, can and does teach us through others, I then study the lesson helps and the best commentaries, placing on my sheet of paper under each verse the lessons learned from that verse and the illustrations suited to the lessons drawn from the verse.

I then study my notes to decide which lessons shall be given the most emphasis; the lessons most needful to the class; the lessons best adapted to the class.

I then go to my books of illustrations to find suitable illustrations for the points of special emphasis, and write down the "catch words" of each illustration under proper verse and lesson.

If there be any connection, Scriptural or otherwise, between the lesson and the lesson of the previous Sunday, as there usually is, I make a study of the intervening Scriptures, and prepare to give the class a quick review of the previous Sunday's lesson, and a brief outline of the intervening Scriptures, or of any other connection between the two lessons.

Following this I study to make a practical application of the lesson of the day, and study specially to make the last two to five minutes of the lesson period intensely impressive to the class.

I then study my notes closely, committing them to memory, that I may not have to look on my notes during the recitation period and thus detract from the lesson.

Saturday night I eat lightly and retire early, that I may get a good night's sleep that my body and mind may be refreshed and be better prepared for the work of teaching the class.

Sunday morning I eat lightly or not at all that the mind may be free and alert.

I then go over my notes carefully that I may get them well in mind, and again try to decide on the point of special emphasis.

Then, before going to my class, I pray that the Holy Spirit may fill me and guide me in the teaching of the lesson; guide me as to what I should teach and the way in which I should teach it; and that he will open the hearts of the class to receive the lessons, and will impress the lessons on their minds and lives.

XVII

USING A HOME-MADE SCRIPTURE INDEX

By the Rev. J. S. Robinson

As with preaching, so with teaching, the first and last thing to do in preparation is to pray. But with this fact understood I proceed with the plan of outward preparation of the lesson.

Beginning early in the week, the first thing I do is to read the lesson passage with the connection, including the entire story. This may mean also to review and enlarge upon my knowledge of the book from which the lesson is taken. At the beginning of the quarter this preliminary survey includes a study comprehensive enough to give a clear sweep of the entire quarter's lessons, or the lessons of two or more quarters, if the lessons happen to cover that much time. There may be a particular section of history covered in a given time, as, for example, in the present quarter, when the exile and the restoration is to be kept in view as a distinct integral part of history. Nothing will quite take the place of getting hold of a lesson in this larger general sense.

The question-lecture method of teaching is the one I have in mind while preparing the lesson. I use three kinds of questions: Those that have to do with the everyday life of the pupils, and so calculated to arouse interest; those that pertain to the lesson in hand, and calculated to elicit and impart information about the present passage of Scripture; and those that are personal, calculated to cause the pupil to do his own thinking and to make his own applications of the truth.

The Sunday School Times is my main help, it having been my pleasure to use the paper for more than a decade. After the preliminary work described above I begin with the Times by reading the "Lesson Pilot," checking with a pencil in the margin anything to which I may wish to revert. "Our Background Material" furnishes me with further information of a preliminary nature. Then I note carefully the black-faced reference figures referring to the various lesson articles and follow them out as I go along. For instance, a reference is sure to be made to Dr. Griffith Thomas' exposition. In this way I gather such facts as the time, geographical features, customs and persons mentioned, and with pencil and paper in hand I note all pertinent matter which I cannot easily check on the paper. Coming to "The Truth That Is Golden," I look for the main truth of the lesson and fix it by one or more suit-

able questions or notations, checking them for the time being or recording them in my own words in the manuscript. "The Teaching Points" usually yield one or more truths to which special emphasis should be given. From the "Questions for Study and Further Discussion" and Dr. Griffith Thomas' "Leading Questions" I am usually able to select one or more questions verbatim, or to reword one or more of them to suit myself.

After the articles have been read in this way I often read some of them again in whole or in part, such as Dr. Alexander Smellie's unique and illuminating expositions, or Philip E. Howard's "From the Platform." Miss Homer-Dixon's short but pointed comments always carry conviction, while "Ridgway" may be depended upon to set the lesson in the light of everyday life. The "Illustration Round-Table" is invaluable for its contribution of anecdote, and the several illustrations receive attention and one or more of them usually find a place in my manuscript for use in pointing the different truths.

All parallel and opposite passages of Scripture are noted and brought into use in the right connection. A good reference Bible is necessary in finding such passages. The Scofield Reference Bible also serves a great purpose, especially the definitions given on summary pages.

Listed books and illustrations that have been filed in my Wilson Index and elsewhere are consulted for pertinent matter. But my largest source of material in this line is found in the Sunday School Times files, which have been bound into annual volumes in the binders furnished by The Sunday School Times Company. I have these volumes dating back for eight years, with some exceptions of lost copies. Not only do I find the Topical Index helpful, but I use my own devised Scriptural Index to The Sunday School Times, which is an addition and quite distinct device from the Topical Index. It interferes in no way with the use of the Topical Index. Each passage of Scripture that has been used for the past eight years (barring the passages in the few copies of the paper that have been lost) is recorded in the index in the order of the books of the Bible, and each passage followed by the date it was used. This index is recorded in a loose-leaf book four and three-quarters by seven and one-half inches. With this Scriptural index close at hand I ascertain whether or not there is an old lesson on the passage of Scripture used in the current lesson, and thus I find the passage, or find that it is not available, and that without handling the cumbrous volume. There is an advantage, too, in recording the index on loose leaves, for at the end of each six months, or at

the least at the end of each year, I want to bring the Scriptural Index up to date; and with the loose-leaf system only one or two leaves will require writing over. This can be done with the minimum amount of labor. Seventeen loose leaves typewritten on one side accommodate the index at present.

With this index at hand I am able to consult any past lesson help contained in the volume. Thus I am enabled to compare the present and past writings of those members of the Times family who have continued to write through the years. Likewise some of those who have ceased to write have left valuable contributions to the lessons recorded here and which are made available by this Scriptural Index.

To give a concrete illustration of the use of the index, take the lesson for July 23, 1922, "Daniel and the Lions," Daniel 6:1-28. My index reveals the fact that this passage was used September 23, 1917. In that issue I find additional exposition and illustration, and best of all it was checked and underscored by me when I studied the lesson at that time. So that memory the more quickly gathers the facts and truths noted there and marshals them for present use.

Having gathered and amassed my material as outlined above, I now proceed to arrange and shape it for my present purpose. I believe that

out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh, and so from the abundant material that has been gathered I purpose to select that which will best serve the ends in view, while preparing to speak from a fulness of heart and with confidence that comes from having mastered the subject.

In selecting this material I shall of course have the main truth in mind; that is, how best to lead up to the main truth. I now arrange my questions and other matter in a climactic order. I note the facts and truths which I have checked in my reading and weave them into my material. I shall take into consideration also what is the best means to get and keep the attention. For this I shall rely mainly upon the use of questions, for while I arrange a regular order I shall do so with a view of varying them in class according as the occasion might demand. I am thinking of the class and how I may draw each of them out and thus have him contribute his part of the thinking and make his part of the personal application.

In addition I shall insert illustrations from everyday life as well as the ones I find in my helps, for this lesson is to meet the needs of the members of the class in their everyday life in the world. The conversion and upbuilding of the spiritual life of the members of the class is the ultimate object sought, and all material and methods must focus here.

Thus, with Bible and notes at hand, and with a prayer for God's presence and aid, I look forward with pleasure to meeting the class on Sunday, having made the best preparation for teaching the class that time and advantage permit.

XVIII

USING LESSON HELPS LAST

By F. C. Blair

I begin early—always a week, usually two weeks, and often months ahead. A lesson calendar for the year I find very useful, and an occasional glance over the program for several months helps to fix the various subjects in my memory. The mind gathers information on these subjects from reading and meditation as the weeks go by. I find an early beginning important because it saturates the mind with the Word, enables the student to gather the best material and saves him from that last-minute preparation (which really means no preparation) so often the bane of both teacher and taught.

I read the lesson text and its connections until they become familiar—I do this carefully and prayerfully. I call this "putting the seed to soak." There is an ever-present temptation to neglect both the reading and the prayer. As the Word of God is likened to seed, it naturally follows that the seed must be given time to ger-

minate. After a careful reading two or three times I find myself able to carry it about in my mind during the day and it becomes a source of encouragement and enlightenment. There is a precious word spoken by the wise man in Proverbs 6:22 to young men concerning a father's commandment and a mother's law. "When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee." This is wonderfully true of the Word of God.

I keep a notebook—Into this I jot down the thoughts that come to me through reading. If nothing comes in the first reading I read the lesson again and again. I do not use any particular order in this notebook. I have on many occasions got out of bed and turned on the light to put down some sweet morsel that arrived in the night watches. Into this book I also put scraps of information from all sources, illustrations, outlines and whatever may become useful in the teaching of a lesson. I find a cheap loose-leaf notebook the best for my purpose.

I analyze the lesson text and thus extract the honey—My method is varied. I compare two or more translations to see if any changes have been made which help to explain difficult or obscure words or phrases. I compare Scripture with Scripture. I use the question-and-answer method

—I ask the questions and seek to have Scripture supply the answers. I study the words of Scripture and their meanings as used in various connections. I find an analytical concordance, such as Young's or Strong's, indispensable for this purpose. The Word of God is living and I discovered years ago that when the mind is saturated with the Book, Scriptures relating to the matter in hand will be attracted to one's mind almost unconsciously—no doubt this is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

I make an outline of the lesson—This outline naturally varies with the character of the lesson and the use made of it. Sometimes the outline is a summary of the great teachings of the lesson text or a character study. In fact, I use anything that will serve to fix attention on the principal features of the lesson. For example, I gathered the teaching of the lesson on "Jeremiah cast into prison" under:

1. The hardships of the Child of God (the mystery of trial, temptations and suffering).

2. The friendships of the Child of God (the mercy of unexpected service seen in the story of the black man).

I make my own outlines, which, while not by any means the best that can be made, are the best I can do, and I find it develops the homiletic faculty and makes Bible study increasingly inter-

esting and profitable. An outline to me is what design is to an architect: it not only preserves unity, aids thought, and saves one from wandering in class work, but also allows the results of lesson study to be preserved for later reference or other service. I cannot too strongly emphasize the benefits of this feature of lesson preparation.

I pray again—This time that my eyes may be opened to see and my heart made to understand what God has for me in the lesson. I am sure the teacher cannot help or lead his class one step beyond his own personal experience. A prepared teacher is quite as important as a prepared lesson. Since Scripture is "God breathed" (2 Pet. 1:21) it is essential that the student shall be Spirit-taught. Indeed, I find that any real preparation of the lesson involves the preparation of the heart as well as the mind, bringing the student into sympathy with the Word of God and making his life tell the same story as his lips. What has been made a blessing in my own life readily becomes a blessing to my class. Difficulties often become luminous to a yielded life. There is a passage in John 7:17 of great import and often overlooked: "If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching."

I use Lesson Helps—I use these last—not that I know more (or as much) as the writers of Lesson Notes, but because independent study, *i. e.*, study

without helps, develops the student as no other method can. David said, "I rejoice at thy Word as one that findeth great spoil" (Psa. 119:162), and Christ himself said, "Every scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven . . . bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." If we never search we shall never know the joy of finding and we shall never have new treasures to bring forth.

I refuse to subscribe for or read Lesson Helps which are not loyal and true to the Word of God. Helps used before personal and independent study become a crutch without which ultimately we cannot walk, while Helps used after independent study are a staff on the journey. The Lesson Helps I use to correct or add to the information I have already gathered.

I am always interested to test my results with the lessons as taught by such men of God as the Rev. W. H. Griffith Thomas or applied by Dr. Alexander Smellie. I find that numerous helps are confusing as well as a waste of time. One or two Sunday-school papers with two or three translations, a Scofield Reference Bible, a concordance, and a modest library of good books furnish an equipment which should enable any person to become a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

PART II

I

HOW I TEACH THE LESSON IN CLASS

By N. Grace Cooledge

This article won The Sunday School Times prize of $25 in gold

When my ten-year-old boys begin to arrive at Sunday-school there is no teacher in sight, for the preaching service is still going on upstairs. But they find on their table a pile of notebooks with owners' names plainly printed on the outside, a manila envelope containing pencils and crayons, and a large sheet with directions for handwork. There is usually a cardboard model of a bell, a ladder, a church, or some similar object, to trace around and color. When the day's lesson seems barren of suggestions for object teaching they may find a couple of easy questions to answer in writing, or a suggestion of something to copy from the lesson leaflet. What with getting his own work done, and helping out the later arrivals, each boy is busy and orderly until the arrival of the teacher, who has a word of

praise or criticism of the work offered for approval, and who then hands out the lesson leaflets for the eager boys to study until the piano sounds. At first this was the signal for a grand scramble to see who should lead the line. But now we have our regular "height formation," shortest first, which causes the uninitiated to wonder where we found so many boys exactly the same size! Besides, we have another reason for getting into line quietly. Teacher says that only little kids shove their chairs or accidentally upset them. Big boys are strong enough to pick them up and set them down again without a sound.

Upon returning to the table, notebooks are piled neatly and put away, pencils and crayons are picked up and put into the big envelope, and pennies are collected. The boys count breathlessly and *silently,* and the one called upon announces the amount proudly and with surprising exactness.

Now for our point of contact: With a younger class it would often be scissors and a sheet of paper, or slate and chalk, and eager eyes watching to be the first to guess what teacher is going to make. But this particular teacher is no artist, and too crude results might awaken ridicule in boys so ready to find amusement, so she uses modeling clay or a jack-knife and a piece of soft wood. The fellow who read over his lesson at

home gets his inning now, for he can tell whether it is an altar or a scroll or Elijah himself, almost before there is a form at all. Sometimes an appropriate Perry picture serves to catch the eye and gain attention.

Maybe teacher can't draw, but she can tell stories with anybody, and when the story is rich in action and climax she makes the most of it. There is no lack of silence or attention then. If interest lags, she abruptly halts and asks a question of the least attentive. At his prompt reply she smilingly says, "Oh, excuse me; I thought I was going to catch you napping." And the story goes on. When it is finished she starts rapid-fire questioning—the easiest possible questions with the most obvious answers, but covering the entire story, and bringing out the lesson teaching. Any boy who gets caught must put his head down and keep it down until some other fellow fails and takes his place. At first this caused discomfort and almost tears, but now they realize it is a sort of game, and down goes the head promptly with a smile.

If the lesson is a prophet's message or some Psalm, and refuses to be easily put into connected form, we read from the leaflet. This can be done in a dozen different ways, as any primary day-school teacher will tell you. There is only one wrong way, and that is for the teacher or some

one pupil to read it entirely through aloud without interruption or comment. If your youngsters will listen attentively Sunday after Sunday to such reading and not fidget, then I am sure they are a very different sort from those we raise in Massachusetts. Here are a few successful methods:

1. Class reads silently to a period. Whoever is called upon must tell what has been read or put his head down and keep it down until some one else fails.

2. Teacher reads aloud, stopping to ask questions as often as possible and even oftener (?) and trying to catch some fellow who has lost his place and make him put his head down, but somehow forgetting to look at the little chap whose mother has warned you that he has not yet succeeded in learning to read, but whose ear-gate is always open and misses nothing.

3. Some boy stands and reads until he makes a mistake, when the first fellow on his feet may take his place. But don't start this until the chairs have been set back a little from the table. Also this method is apt to be destructive to a comprehension of the subject matter, and should only be used to enliven the very barrenest lessons.

4. My most common method is to have a boy read a sentence or two and then myself question some other boy, preferably the one sitting

farthest from him, on what has been read. Then let some one else read a little farther.

Lesson finished, we study our memory verse silently and see who will be the first to repeat it correctly. We try it first turn and turn about and then in concert, for who knows but our class will be the very one chosen to repeat it for the school? This is the part we omit when pressed for time, for it can be made up at home.

Last of all is our heart-to-heart talk. Perhaps I tell them a little tale of a naughty boy in my own schoolroom, and of how he got good again, or the story of some conversion, or of some little lad's battle with temptation, or some incident from the mission field. Often we think of something we'd like to ask God for, and so we bow our heads and talk to him, teacher first, and boys following with the same words, spoken either by turn or in concert. This moment is golden, and we begrudge it to any chance visitor or insistent messenger who steals it away.

Now pretend that you are one of these same small boys, and let me see whether you have been paying attention:

1. Why do my boys come early, rather than late?

2. How do I keep them quiet before the session opens?

3. Which item in my lesson presentation would

scarcely be possible without home study on my part?

4. What home preparation do I require from the boys, and what immediate reward do they realize for making such an effort?

5. How do I gain and hold attention?

6. Does my class do any memorizing? If so, what and when?

7. Which part of the period would be a complete failure without previous secret prayer on my part?

8. Are there any of these suggestions which you couldn't follow from lack of material or training?

9. If you can't hold your class silent and eager, is it a lack of personal magnetism, or are you out of touch with God?

10. Would you be glad to have your own little lad in my class? Why?

II

GIVING PRAYER FIRST PLACE

By Mrs. F. W. Stone

Eight years ago I was "called" to the "spit-ball corner," made up of boys ranging in age from nine to sixteen. This was the only boys' class (barring the Primary) in a Sunday-school with an enrolment of approximately four hundred, with about two hundred in attendance.

With a fresh Christian experience, but without a working knowledge of the Bible, I accepted the charge, after making it a matter of prayer. There were fourteen boys, and my first step was to visit the home of each, let the parents know my purpose and secure their co-operation so far as attendance, study of the lesson, and offering were concerned.

Picnics, entertaining in my home, always remembering the youngsters at Christmas, visiting any and all members of the family in sickness or trouble, following up each boy to secure regular attendance, and myself being present on time, invariably elicited co-operation.

My study of the lesson began Sunday and occupied some part of each day during the week, and it was viewed from every angle, with the Bible, denominational lesson helps, and any others, including The Sunday School Times, that were available.

Feeling that I had a sacred task and one of the biggest I had ever undertaken, these boys and their families were special objects of my daily prayer. In my eagerness for spiritual equipment I availed myself of every service at the church, haunted revivals, took in every possible Sunday-school convention as well as summer institutes, to all of which I am much indebted for inspiration and information. I read all I could obtain that was suggested as helpful to a Sunday-school teacher, and dropped all magazine and most secular reading as a result of my awakening, so eager was I to use my time to the best purpose in fitting myself to be a capable teacher and soul-winner.

I did not always have good attention, even when I thought I was best prepared to handle the lesson, and the thoughtless youngsters have even succeeded a few times in bringing me to tears, right in their presence, but these failures of mine convinced me of deficiency in myself and urged to deeper preparation. I was never for a moment discouraged or inclined to relinquish my difficult but nonetheless loved task.

From time to time during the years the boys have been received into the church and hundreds have passed through my hands. Many have gone beyond my observation. Some I have been able to keep in touch with by letter. Numbers are in college, while more are in high school and the grades, and I have the satisfaction of seeing a number active in the choir, the Epworth League, and some teaching classes of their own. Yet ever the question in my heart is, viewing the numbers I have had in comparison with the few I can observe, "Are my boys saved?" Have I done all that I could? Am I really making Christianity a practical thing that they may fully appropriate at some time in their lives? Am I making a single indelible impression as a teacher of vital things? Am I sowing the seed in such a way as to be *sure* of the harvest?

Never have I felt satisfied so far as my own effort or efficiency was concerned, even when I had my class at Sunday-school, at church service, at League, at prayer meeting and all church entertainments. Personality might be responsible for all this and Jesus not be a reality to one of these boys as his accepted personal Saviour!

I could only keep them before the Throne of Grace and trust God to bring them under the influence of more capable instructors, where I failed in the brief period allotted for instruction.

Always I was looking for the solution of how best to use this period for definite and lasting results.

Last fall, my big class of high school boys were handed over to a splendid Christian man teacher and I fell heir to a group aged nine to twelve. For a bit I didn't know whether I had gone to the foot of the class or had been promoted.

We were eighteen strong! They were new to me and I to them and I resolved upon new tactics. It had always been my custom to begin the study of the lesson with prayer, which I offered myself, when there was not too much confusion or too frequent interruption. Hence prayer in class was many times omitted, though not before. As soon as the collection and roll call could be despatched, I talked to them about prayer, its meaning, the necessity of perfect faith, meeting conditions before expecting God to honor our petitions; explained how we should pray for essentials, illustrating and asking them questions; emphasized maintaining an attitude of reverence, keeping closed eyes. I said:

"Boys, we are here to study God's Word. The Bible *is* God's Word—not *about* God's Word. Let us all kneel down with our Bibles before us on the chairs and thank God for his Word and ask him to help us to understand it as we study together. Now, boys, close your eyes, forget every-

thing and everybody but the Lord and talk to him. If you have done anything wrong, ask his forgiveness, praise God for all he is and has done—tell him you want to learn to love and serve him—that you want to grow to be Christian men; that you want him to be with you to strengthen you in the time of temptation. Ask God to bless your homes, your parents, those who are not Christians. We are here to learn to talk to God as well as to understand him when he talks to us. We are not here to criticize one another. If you can only say a few words you will be stronger next time."

Well, they began—stumbling, awkward little prayers they were at first, but to the point and no two alike. What one boy didn't pray for the other did. Prayer has consumed the biggest part of our lesson period ever since I took this class.

We have used no lesson helps other than the Bible. I study the lesson as formerly, tell them where to find it in their Bibles, and give them some verse to memorize. I saw that every boy was supplied with his Bible by his parents or myself and they are expected to have them in class.

Sometimes we can only touch upon the current lesson, usually finding some application of our prayer training in our lesson which I develop by asking questions, which the boys answer them-

selves. The members of this class will carry a definite memory of our prayer service with them through the years to come, and will always know how to pray and will not be afraid of their own voices.

This has been demonstrated on several occasions at revival meetings, when they have led out freely and without embarrassment. They are always ready with Scripture verses and I, for the first time, feel that I have accomplished something definite.

One little illustration showing what prayer means to my boys, that faith in prayer has been established and dependence upon God for help in time of trouble:

One Saturday night a few weeks since I was summoned to the telephone about 8:30. A little sobbing voice answered my "hello."

"This is Jim. Oh, Mrs. S——, my—daddy is —*so* sick—they don't think he will live. Won't you—please—pray for—for him!"

I can never tell any one what that broken little appeal from that eleven-year-old boy meant to me. I did not ask him any questions—he was in no condition to answer—nor I to ask. I just answered, "Bless your darling heart, of course I'll pray for your daddy!"

A sobbing "Good-bye," and there I stood with pounding heart and tears flowing unrestrainedly.

I called the leader of our women's prayer band, related the circumstance and asked her to get the members to their knees as quickly as possible. This she promised to do.

I went at once to the stricken home. The father, who was a prominent physician, had been taken to the hospital and operated on a few hours before, and was in a very critical condition as the result of the removal of an internal growth with a suspicion of malignancy. The outlook was very grave, they told me, and there was an atmosphere of hopelessness.

No one knew of little Jim's telephoning. After rolling the burden of prayer to his teacher's heart he went to bed and to sleep.

At Sunday-school the next morning the Superintendent called for special prayer for the sick man. I learned later he was the subject of prayer in all the classes and various organizations of the church. When I told my boys of their comrade's distress and his appeal for prayer, you should have heard them pray! They not only prayed that the father's life might be spared, but that he and the whole family would be drawn closer to God.

And they believed their prayers would be answered, too. During the two weeks that followed the doctor's life seemed to hang in the balance, but as a result of his little son's faith in God and

his pathetic appeal for prayer, the prayer ball was set rolling, and my boys and I believe that the strength of united prayer was a big factor in restoring the father to them, and that in teaching the lesson it has been most profitable to give instruction in prayer a prominent place.

III

USING SALESMANSHIP IN TEACHING

By Brookes B. Tarlton

For the last three years I have been teaching 'teen age girls. Previously I had taught boys, both small and large, for a good many years.

My aim in teaching is to get my pupils to decide for Jesus Christ, to develop their Christian character, and to study the Bible, and for us all to have a good time in so doing.

I do not use any written notes or lesson helps in teaching and endeavor to have each member supplied with a Bible.

I find that I can get and hold their attention much better by looking directly into their eyes.

I do not follow any set formula or procedure in teaching, but believe, rather, by prayer and careful preparation, in filling myself so full of the subject that I am eager to begin teaching.

Before starting the actual reading of the lesson text and commenting upon it, I try to get the class into a receptive mood, interested and curious, if possible, to learn what is to follow.

To attain this objective I may briefly review the previous lesson or get some of the girls to tell the absentees what they learned the previous Sunday. For nearly a year I devoted the first few minutes of our time to the learning and reciting of the books of the Bible and always found this an admirable point of contact. Sometimes we take the title of the lesson and find out what we know about it. For instance, on the lesson, "Ezekiel, the Watchman of Israel," I started by asking what they knew about Israel and by questioning and suggestions we worked back to Abraham. Sometimes we begin at Saul or Moses or Abraham and work forward. This helps to give the pupils a general outline of Bible history.

One possible objection to this method is that we sometimes get so interested that there is not sufficient time left for the lesson proper. When the class is "tuned up" we read the lesson in rotation, commenting on each verse or small group of verses as we proceed and making practical applications as opportunities for so doing occur.

In questioning I try to conform to the laws of association and build upon something the girls already know. In this connection I encourage them to ask questions and, if unable to give a satisfactory answer, will try to have an answer ready the following Sunday.

One way to maintain interest is to discuss the meaning and derivation of unusual words as they occur in the text. A little knowledge of Latin, Greek and French is very useful here and appeals to the high school girls especially. For example, in the lesson where Jeremiah was "mired" and "old cast clouts and rotten rags" were thrown down to him, I asked them the meaning of the word "clout." Two of the girls, evidently of a sporting turn, said it meant a blow, but only one knew that it meant a piece of cloth and she was our minister's daughter, and in the course of the Methodist itinerancy, had lived in a part of the country where the word still survived. I could not refrain from a little joke at her expense on her backwoods experience. I find that an occasional laugh shakes the class together, as it were. Of course I did not neglect to explain the use made of the clouts and to apply the obvious lesson that seemingly useless things may become very useful and also, the more important lesson, that there may be a right and a wrong way of doing a good action.

The use of illustrations helps to keep the class interested. I employ references to history, ancient and contemporary, to the late great war in connection with the geography of Palestine, and also to local events and conditions. For instance, when our lesson is on the Crucifixion I ex-

plain the meaning of the letters I. N. R. I. on the crucifixes which are to be seen in many places in our city. On a Christmas lesson I usually make a chronological reference and explain the meaning and significance of the letters A. D.

In lessons on the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel and their respective captivities, I often refer to the Anglo-Israel theory and on some lessons employ the facts, rather than the theories, of geology, astronomy and other sciences.

I often refer to or quote well-known hymns when we encounter the Bible verses that evidently inspired their authors. Anecdotes and illustrations of answers to prayer have proved very interesting, and sometimes have elicited unexpected responses.

One method that, so far, I have employed but once proved very effective. The lesson was "Paul at Corinth," following "Paul at Athens," and, acting on the suggestion of a writer in The Sunday School Times, we decided to have an extempore debate. Our class is made up of business and high school girls in about equal numbers. I called the high school girls "The Athenians" and the business girls "The Corinthians," and they debated the question, "Should Paul have remained longer at Athens?" the "Athenians" taking the affirmative. Both sides took hold with a will and all I had to do was to sit back in my chair

and smile. One of the "Athenians" had just declared that Paul was a "quitter" for leaving Athens so soon, when the closing bell rang. It certainly was a most interesting session.

When we have finished the reading I review briefly, if there is time, and apply the Golden Text. But in any case I always try to emphasize one or two of the lesson truths before closing time.

When I am asked questions relating to character and conduct, I avoid, as much as possible, being dogmatic, referring them back to their own conscience and giving as a standard of conduct, "What would Jesus have me do?" I try to train them to think for themselves and "prove all things" by Bible study and prayer.

In a work on practical psychology I was much impressed with a comparison of the work and qualifications of the teacher and the salesman. From experience I have found that approved methods of salesmanship are a great help in teaching, and conversely, that my teaching has helped me wonderfully in my daily work.

The first requisite of a good salesman is to have great faith in the firm he represents and the goods he sells. Following this analogy, in accordance with Isaiah 55:1, 2, I am trying to sell the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Jesus Christ, and the apostolic dictum, "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

IV

DEVELOPING CLASS RESPONSIBILITY

By Rebecca S. Amidon

One of the secrets of teaching is to have every step of the lesson go with vim, and nothing be permitted to drag. So, before going to class, I have plans carefully laid out for the complete use of the forty minutes that are allowed for class work. We aim to have the lesson close about three minutes before the period is over. This gives time for friendly handshaking, which is necessary for the wholesome life of the class.

At the beginning of the lesson the class president has the meeting opened with prayer and then asks for a report on absent members and those who are ill, to whom we always send flowers as a class message of sympathy. Next the collection basket is passed; this has two divisions, one for the class and one for the general Sunday-school contribution. When we have a special collection for the missionary, the orphanage, or for any particular work in which we are engaged at the time, all the money goes for the special pur-

pose. This part of the program takes not more than seven minutes. All outside business matters are considered at the regular monthly class meetings.

After this opening the class is free to give undivided attention to the lesson.

In the Bible class teaching, the same as in regular day-school work, I vary the approach to the lesson in order that the element of a happy surprise may invite the attention of the class. I frequently have some member of the class review briefly the previous lesson. In that case the member is given entire freedom, and, of course, each one has her own plan, and they vie with one another to make this interesting. At another time I have one briefly relate the main ideas contained in the Bible portion between the last Sunday's and the present lesson. This is always by pre-appointment, and has for its aim the securing of twofold results: Bible study and strength in ability to impart Bible truths.

Following this, or sometimes without this, I give the historical and geographical background of the lesson, showing the condition of the people, the time and the location of the places as vividly as possible. A map in the room aids materially in this. Often this concrete knowledge of the faraway times serves in furnishing apology for the mistakes or misdeeds of the people under dis-

cussion. Sometimes this knowledge, showing the direct Divine guidance of the people, the promises fulfilled, or the warnings unheeded, serves to arouse the feeling of disapproval at the lack of foresight and wisdom on the part of the people concerned. By this means both teacher and class members become more alert to the reception of the truth; and for the time, at least, we realize our own need to learn God's plans. For by this means we perceive that the Bible people were merely human as we are, and that God is ever the same.

In presenting the dominant portion of the lesson it is wise not to let the work become monotonous, so I vary the methods. On one day I follow the lecture plan and, step by step, give a talk on the lesson. In preparing this talk I have put my best effort to give much that is worthy of consideration. It must not be at all in the nature of a sermon. The preaching teacher would be too apt to cut the class off from the feeling of responsibility for the success of the lesson. While giving my prepared talk, which seems more effective when no notes are used, I also frequently ask a question, as if I were consulting members of the class. This question, which I always attempt to have in line with the lesson and very suggestive of thought, is never permitted to embarrass any one. It is sometimes thrown out in

a general way. Then when I notice that some modest member has an answer ready, but hesitates to give it, I put the question direct to that one. The feeling of satisfaction that shows in the face of that class member has paid for my effort. Also, after this attempt, this special member is more ready to take part in the lessons later.

After my talk I ask the class if any one has a thought on the lesson that would be helpful. Sometimes a member will comment on some point I have made. Often one will suggest a related thought that came to mind during my talk. Again one will bring up a point that had not been brought out, or ask some question. Every suggestion offered by members of the class is welcomed and carefully considered. As teacher I do not hold myself alone responsible; I make it my aim to have as many individuals as possible express some thought on the lesson. When members take part their interest increases and they make an effort to attend more regularly. But I do not allow class discussion to drift. I direct it warily and skillfully toward the consideration of the special lesson matter for the day. For instance, I will remark, "That point will come up in a few weeks for special study; I am glad you mentioned it today." Or, "There is so much in the lesson for today that is more vital that we might leave the discussion of that until later and

see if there is time." Or again, "That is a question that would be worth while to look up." And then I assign some class member to investigate and report on that point at the next lesson.

In teaching "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream" I found that the class had not read the Book of Daniel. Therefore at the beginning I gave the setting of the story, making very clear the place, the time and the general condition existing at that time. We then read the lesson for the day. I reviewed the life of Daniel up to the time of the lesson. This naturally disclosed traits in his character that formed foundation for some of the teachings of the day's lesson. We noted his prayerful confidence in Jehovah and how trust in prayer aided him, his surprising humility, his careful thought for others, his powerful self-control, and his temperate living in the midst of luxury. Through the use that God made of him in later life the result of all this self-training and of his right living in adversity forcefully disclosed to us some of God's many ways of directing his people, and suggested practical application for today. One member thought that the life of the youth Daniel would be wonderfully inspirational for church members to teach to their boys and girls. One deplored the fact that parent-teaching of the Bible among Christian people had almost become obsolete.

Several times mention has been made of the value of class participation in discussing the lesson. One method that commands individual member co-operation proves worth trying occasionally. Days ahead of time I plan the lesson in detail. Then I write topics that are broadly comprehensive, and in themselves suggest the method of discussing them. Then a week before time for use I distribute these topics, one each to members of the class, for them to discuss. The topics are numbered and, as one is finished, the member having the next number takes her part. This plan is enjoyed by the class. If a member to whom a topic has been given is absent she secures a substitute, but generally all to whom parts are assigned are present.

To ask how to hold attention in class would seem parallel to asking how to interest boys in a ball game. I always plan to have something absorbingly worth while to bring to the class. I do not pander to sensational topics. People today seem hungry for the knowledge of God's Word, and I as a teacher merely consider myself as a leader in studying the Bible.

V

USING QUESTION, TOPICAL AND LECTURE METHODS

By Alice M. Williams Linsley

My class is composed of both men and women, ranging in age from twenty-five to forty-five, and has an average attendance of about fifty. The membership includes men of several different callings and women in business life, as well as home-makers, so that the members differ somewhat widely in interests and degrees of intellectual culture and spiritual as well. It is my purpose to make the teaching profitable to all, but especially to avoid the introduction of material beyond the range of the more meagerly educated.

We confine ourselves to the use of the Bible in class. Although I conscientiously study all the commentaries and helps available to me and encourage the class to do so in preparation of the lesson, I never bring to the class any of these books or periodicals, but stand before it with the Book itself, and only incidentally and sparingly

quote from, or cite, other authorities. Although I make free use of allusions to history, literature and current events, especially those concerned with missionary activities and religious movements, as well as to familiar matters of science or art, it is only by way of introduction or illustration. We never employ the lesson time, or any part of it, for anything but actual Bible study. We hold ourselves quite closely to the text of the lesson, with the Scripture bearing upon it and leading up to it. For instance, on a certain Sunday we did not study the general subject, "Isaiah's Ideal for a World at Strife," using the lesson text as illuminative of that subject; we devoted our attention primarily to the text itself and endeavored to discover the prophet's message from it. We find that this close adherence to the Scripture passage chosen for the lesson tends to prevent the introduction of irrelevant subjects and superficial and unprofitable discussions.

I always make some assignment of the lesson beforehand, sometimes in the form of general questions for all the class to look up, sometimes dividing the members into groups and assigning a topic to a group. Often I ask certain ones privately to prepare a presentation of some part of the lesson, thus using the element of the unexpected to attract interest. Once we had a short, informal debate on Paul's attitude on the ques-

tion of John Mark versus that of Barnabas. I always write out the assignments on the blackboard or on slips of paper.

I secure the interest of the class at the beginning, sometimes by a startling statement, an unexpected question, or a touch of humor. Or, if anything has taken place in the opening exercises of the school to cause any preoccupation of their minds, or if for any reason the mood of the class is not attentive and reverent, I ask all to bow in silent prayer for a moment before I begin to teach.

I use one of three methods in teaching a lesson: Questions and answers, topical discussions by different members, or a modified lecture method, interspersing my remarks with an occasional question.

A lesson on Naaman the Leper I taught, as I recall, almost entirely by questions and answers based on 2 Kings 5:1-15, substantially as follows:

What facts have we in the first verse about Naaman?

Which is the most striking?

Of what spiritual disease does leprosy remind us?

A member of the class previously notified here pointed out seven resemblances between leprosy and sin.

Did Naaman *know* he was a leper?

We have here, then, in type, a sinner conscious of his sin.

Is *consciousness* of sin a necessary step in the progress toward salvation?

Who is introduced in the second verse?

What part has she in Naaman's cure?

Did she know *all* about Elisha, how he might be reached and how he performed his cures?

Is it necessary to know theology and be able to explain deep spiritual matters in order to point any one to the Saviour?

Who is introduced in verse four?

Do we willingly serve as a mere messenger or a mere link in the chain when opportunity offers?

What did Naaman take with him?

What does many a sinner try to offer in return for salvation? (Wealth, education, morality, good standing, etc.)

To whom did Naaman first go?

Do some turn to the church, or even a lodge, to satisfy their spiritual natures, instead of to the Saviour?

In verse nine, however, Naaman comes to the right place, though not in the right spirit.

Why did Elisha not come out as Naaman expected?

Why did Elisha say "seven times" and why "in Jordan?"

Why was Naaman "wroth?"

Is it the same feeling that makes a moral man or refined woman of the world resent the "mourner's bench" or the public confession?

How do the servants help in verse thirteen?

Are we sometimes called upon for a like task? Is it easy?

I then described as dramatically as I could Naaman's dipping in Jordan, his probable feelings as time after time he humbled himself with no apparent result, his joy after complete obedience. I called attention to the force of the simile "as a little child."

Then very quietly and earnestly I made it personal.

Have *you,* each one of you, come "clean through?"

Or because peace did not come immediately, have you ceased praying as Naaman might have stopped at the third dipping? And is that *all* of the story?

What did Naaman do after his cleansing? Have you done this?

Or have you as yet made no confession of the salvation you feel you have received; have you rendered no real thanks?

We then closed with prayer for any present who had not yet taken all the steps, and offered ourselves anew as Christians to be used in helping such.

I have never led the class in a lesson which gave evidence of making a deeper impression than this exceedingly simple presentation.

The topical method works out well for Review Sunday with us. The best review we have ever had was upon one occasion when I asked every one to mention the lesson of the quarter which helped him most and tell why. Then two members discussed topics given them a fortnight in advance: "The Meaning of the Miracles of Elisha" and "A Comparison of the Work and Character of Elijah and Elisha."

I take great care in the selection of the persons requested to give such discussions, that no ill-advised or harmful remarks be made by those out of sympathy with the things of the Spirit.

Often the topical method is good for presenting the introduction or background of the lesson. While we were taking the course on Paul I assigned at times the geography of the lesson to one, points of history or customs to another, and so on. A map drill is helpful, as are also character studies.

For such a lesson as the one on Amos I use the lecture method, for in my class, as in perhaps every typical Sunday-school class, there are some who would know so little about the book of Amos that the lesson passage could have very little meaning for them. I had some one report the

known facts about Amos the man, and then I presented, as vividly as might be, a picture of his times, of the political situation and the spiritual condition of Israel lying back of his message. I gave an outline of the book of Amos and read some of its finest passages, pointed out some of his most striking figures and dwelt on the spiritual import of two or three of his parables. By that time the class was able to enter intelligently into a discussion of the lesson passage. We closed with an application to our own days and the extravagance, idleness and selfish indifference of which we personally are guilty. I always make sure to save time for the application and appeal.

This application is usually very homely, simple and direct, dealing with what I conceive to be the central spiritual truth of the lesson. I always pray especially for guidance in this. It is my endeavor to present some *saving* truth in every lesson, to lead my class to see our Lord Jesus Christ as the center of all Scripture, to find in the obscurest portions and in the darkest annals of the Old Testament history some promise, or prototype, or prophecy, or foregleam of the world's Redeemer, and to know him personally in full salvation and joyful service.

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